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Personal networks in Portuguese society: a configurational and lifecourse approach

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Doutoramento em Sociologia

(Sociologia da Família)

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Tese orientada pela Prof. Doutora Karin Wall e pelo Prof. Doutor Eric D. Widmer

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Abstract

The main aim of this thesis is to examine how individuals construct their personal networks in Portuguese society, and to explore the instrumental and expressive interdependencies established within the network. Combining a configurational approach and a lifecourse perspective, we aim to: 1) understand the generative principles of relational closeness which underpin the construction of personal networks; 2) map the diversity of personal configurations and the main shaping factors; 2) characterize the social capital generated in instrumental, expressive and normative interdependencies within each configuration; and transversal to all these issues, 3) discuss the nature of relational choice, and how the latter is shaped by social contexts associated with life-stage, structural, normative, family, biographical and subjective factors. This research draws on a national survey on family trajectories and social networks, which was applied to a representative sample of men and women born in 1935-40, 1950-55 and 1970-75, who represent different social and historical times in Portuguese society, as well as different life stages. The research is embedded in contemporary debates on the transformation of family and personal life in western societies, in particular the theories of individualization, as well as other more interpretative theoretical approaches which frame these changes in the context of the processes of family change and pluralization of the lifecourse.

Keywords: personal networks; cohorts; lifecourse; configurations; social capital

Resumo.

O objectivo principal desta tese é compreender de que modo os indivíduos constroem as suas redes pessoais na sociedade portuguesa, bem como explorar as interdependências instrumentais e afectivas que se estabelecem no interior da rede. Articulando a abordagem configuracional com a perspectiva do percurso de vida, procura-se: 1) compreender os mecanismos geradores de proximidade relacional que regulam a construção das redes pessoais; 2) mapear a diversidade de configurações pessoais e os factores que as condicionam; 3) caracterizar o tipo de capital social gerado pelas interdependências instrumentais, expressivas e normativas dentro de cada configuração; e transversal a todas estas questões, 4) discutir a natureza das escolhas relacionais, tendo em conta os contextos diferenciados em que elas ocorrem associados a factores geracionais e de ciclo de vida, estruturais, normativos, familiares, biográficos e subjectivos. Esta investigação baseia-se em dados provenientes de um inquérito nacional sobre trajectórias familiares e redes sociais, o qual foi aplicado a uma amostra representativa de homens e mulheres nascidos em 1935-40, 1950-55 e 1970-75, que representam diferentes tempos sociais e históricos na sociedade portuguesa, mas também diferentes fases do ciclo de vida. A discussão enquadra-se nos debates contemporâneos sobre as transformações na vida familiar e pessoal nas sociedades ocidentais associados à modernidade, nos quais se têm destacado as teorias da individualização, mas também abordagens teóricas mais compreensivas que enquadram estas mudanças no contexto de processos de diversificação das relações familiares e pessoais e de pluralização do percurso de vida.

Palavras-chave: redes pessoais; percurso de vida; coortes; configurações; capital social

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Uma mulher à frente do seu tempo.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Research issues

The main aim of the present dissertation is to study the way individuals construct their personal networks in the context of biographical and generational time, and to explore the expressive and instrumental interdependencies developed within the network. We will compare three cohorts of Portuguese men and women representing different historical and biographical times. The empirical studies will draw on data from a national survey on the lifecourse and social networks, which was carried out between 2009 and 2010, within the context of a research project "Family Trajectories and Social Networks: The Lifecourse in an Intergenerational Perspective", coordinated by Karin Wall.

Close or distant relatives, former family members, friends, neighbours and co-workers, are an integral part of the relational settings in which individuals are embedded in everyday life. These networks of personal relationships play an important role over the lifecourse of individuals as a *milieu* of socialization, but also as a source of support and identity, contributing to their well-being and social integration. In fact, *personal networks* enclose a subjective and a material nature as they provide both expressive and instrumental support, ranging from giving advice and sharing confidences to lending money or taking care of children. Although these relational interdependencies fulfil important needs of its actors, they can also potentiate tensions and forms of social and normative control, in particular, within intergenerational relationships or by the interference of the network on the couple. Actually, solidarity and conflict can be seen as two faces of the same coin within close relationships

As people age, their personal networks evolve and adjust to transitions and critical events, being in constant reconfiguration over the lifecourse. They expand and shrink, they may be restricted to relatives or open to friends, they may include long-lasting ties or recent acquaintances (Bidart & Lavenu, 2005; Gray, 2009; Van Tilburg, 1998). Besides these biographical adjustments, personal networks are also shaped by the cultural and historical conditions of the generational time. Thus, economical and historical backgrounds, welfares regimes and public policies, gender roles, cultures of care and family responsibilities, models of parent-child relationships or conjugal functioning have a profound influence on how people connect to others.

Personal networks may thus present a variety of configurations according to the characteristics of who is included, and in terms of the patterns of connectedness and the type of exchanges established between its members; commonly called as the *compositional* and the *structural* dimensions (Widmer, 2010). These two dimensions are intimately associated since "who" belongs to the network shapes "how" they are connected. Some individuals organize their sociability and intimate relationships only inside family bonds, while others are integrated in mixed networks, combining friends and relatives. Other individuals may even restrict their intimate circles to non-kin affinities, such as friends and neighbours. As a matter of fact, there is a wide range of friendship repertoires and ties commonly labelled as friends that can go from pals or buddies to best friends or soul-mates (Allan, 1996; Adams &Allan, 1998; Pahl & Spencer, 2004; Pahl & Spencer, 2010). Friends can be in a unique relationship with ego, but they can also be absorbed into the family realm, depending on the level of commitment (Pahl & Spencer, 2004; Portugal, 2014). Long-lasting friendships with a history of co-residence characterized by positive interactions are likely to be considered as family (Wall & Gouveia, 2014).

Several combinations of close ties are thus possible. These compositional differences certainly have consequences in regards to the type of support the network members can provide and the architecture of connections. Thus, personal networks can also be framed as social capital stemming from the mutual interdependencies which take place within these relational settings. In family-centred configurations, the members are usually in close relation with each other and frequently in contact within dense webs of mutual support, often characterized as a *bonding* type of social capital. Instead, in mixed networks, relatives and friends may not be connected to each other, constituting independent subsets of the same configuration, with the individual being the vertex of all the relationships, acknowledge as *bridging* type of social capital (Putman, 2000; Burt, 1992; Widmer, 2010). Traditionally, friends are seen as intimates, with whom people share secrets and seek for advice or engage in leisure activities and not so much to exchange material help; whereas kinship members are mainly seen as providers of both material and expressive type of support. Networks can thus vary in *composition* (e.g., ties, sex, age, education) and *structure* (e.g., dense, sparse, specialized) and according to the *content/nature* (e.g., emotional support, conflict, financial help) and *form* of exchange (e.g., flowing from one family side, frequency of support) (Portugal, 2014).

As stated before, this diversity of the arrangements of personal relationships is strongly influenced by the social and normative backgrounds which frame the individual. But they are foremost conditional upon life-course pathways; hence they are continuously re-constructed during life transitions and critical events (Bidart & Lavenu, 2005; Gray, 2009; McDonald & Maray, 2010; Van Tilburg, 1998). Thus, the modes of construction of close relationships and the complexity of the personal configurations are a mirror of the intersection between the historical and biographical time of an individual.

From the perspective of Portuguese society, often depicted as strongly tied to a familialistic culture, but which has also undergone changing trends of modernisation over the last decades, **the aim of this thesis is to understand how individuals build their personal networks in the context of their historical and biographical context, and to explore the instrumental and expressive interdependencies developed between the network members.** Therefore, setting *personal networks* as our object of analysis, we will compare the personal networks of Portuguese men and women born in three cohorts, representing different historical and biographical times.

Thus, we will focus on four complementary issues:

- Identifying the *underlying principles* which generate and regulate the construction of relational closeness, namely, kinship, co-residence, homophily, and attribution of a family meaning, but also instrumental and expressive principles, which people mobilize as criteria of belonging
- Examining the *diversity of personal configurations*, in particular, testing for predictions of kinship detachment, individuals' isolation and contraction in the conjugal dyad; and exploring the meanings of family within it.
- Investigating the consequences of the diversification of personal configurations on the type of *social capital* generated by the expressive, instrumental and normative interdependencies, also assessing the supposed risk of social isolation through the loss of the integrative role of family;
- The *nature of choice* (relational and contextual choice), by adopting a multidimensional approach of the social factors which account as differentiation mechanisms in the construction of personal networks along structural, normative,

family and biographical contexts; the *relational* nature of choice will be discussed on the basis of the *linked lives* concept, by grasping the interactions and interdependencies developed within personal configurations.

This research will draw on two main theoretical approaches: a configurational approach and a life-course perspective. To frame this research issue within a configurational approach, the study goes beyond the concept of family as a household unit or a set of predefined roles, broadening the analysis to a wider context where individuals choose their significant others through different criteria of closeness. Therefore, we will shift our focus from the co-resident family unit to a wider arena of ego-centred personal networks. To capture the diversity of personal relationships according to the intersection of historical, social and biographical contexts and in order to explore the dynamics of agency and structure in the construction of close ties, we add a diachronic dimension by adopting a lifecourse perspective.

Structure of the dissertation

The present dissertation is organized in two main parts: the first part includes the 'introduction', the 'theoretical chapter' and the 'methodological chapter'; and the second part is divided into four empirical chapters, namely 'characterizing the three birth-cohorts', 'understanding the dimensions of closeness', 'mapping the diversification of personal configurations' and 'framing personal networks as social capital'.

Part 1 offers the theoretical framework and the methodological strategy, which guide the empirical studies presented in the second part. In the theoretical chapter, we begin by understanding the changing trends in family and personal life in contemporary western societies, which led us to engage in a critical reflection on the epistemological and empirical research issues of sociology of family. We then discuss the interpretation of these changes by examining individualisation theories, also stating our critical position in relation to some of their main assumptions. Given that the role of "family" and its meaning in contemporary societies is at the heart of this discussion, we underline the importance of more interpretative approaches to family life, in particular, the configurational analysis. After explaining why we chose the configurational approach to carry out our research, we describe the embeddedness

of this perspective in a broader paradigm of social network analysis, its research assumptions and the way social capital has been understood within this relational perspective. Finally, we clarify the importance of adding the dimension of time and therefore, the need to combine this approach with the lifecourse perspective. We end the chapter with some examples of empirical studies on personal and family networks in which a configurational perspective was adopted.

In the *methodological* chapter we will explain the assumptions which underlie social network analysis and the techniques which need to be applied in order to obtain this kind of data. We begin by explaining the shift from traditional methods to social network analysis, in particular the ego-centred approach. We explain the implications of the several types of name-generator and we justify our name-generator choice; and we discuss the cognitive assumptions of the Family Network Method, and thus, the potential informational biases. We end this topic by describing the several sociometric indexes which can be computed to measure the structural characteristics of the networks. Another major topic is the discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of a cross-cohort design, in particular the issue of age-cohort-period effect. We end by focusing on the "Family Trajectories and Social Networks" survey, describing the sampling, data-collection, and the organization of the questionnaire, explaining in detail, how we mapped the individuals' personal networks.

Part 2 consists of the presentation of four empirical lines of research in which we investigate the four main complementary issues to approach our core research question. The *first chapter* characterizes the three birth-cohorts by drawing on different dimensions of analysis, ranging from the macro level of society to the micro level of the individual. We contextualize the three birth-cohorts, not only in terms of the social and historical background of their generational time, but also in terms of their structural, normative, family and biographical differences.

The *second chapter* provides a descriptive analysis of the morphological aspects of personal networks across the three birth-cohorts, based on the salience of particular key-attributes of its members (alters). This portrait of personal networks will allow us to uncover the generative principles of closeness, which seem to guide individuals' relational choices and thus underpin the construction of relational proximity. We will also explore how the action of these

principles is shaped by several factors operating at different levels: lifecourse dynamics, socially differentiated contexts, and family biographical circumstances.

The aim of the *third chapter* is to provide an integrated reading of the arrangements of personal networks as configurations, by focusing on the compositional dimension of personal networks. We will carry out a systematic analysis of the main types of personal configurations by focusing on the combination of ties in the total sample, but also within each cohort, thus controlling for age-period-cohort effects. The construction of the typology will be followed by the examination of the impact of different multidimensional shaping factors on the type of configuration, thus examining the contextual nature of choice.

The *fourth chapter* analyses the structure of social capital provided by each type of personal configuration. We will be able to understand how these configurations and their embeddedness in the different social contexts may shape the expressive and instrumental interdependencies. The role of ego as giver and provider will be examined based on the multiplexity of resources, as well as examined in the context of the overall network structure. At the end we will be able to characterize the patterns of social capital of each configuration based on the composition, genealogical orientation, role as provider or/and receiver, network activation, structural properties and normative consequences.

Finally, in the discussion and conclusions we present the main findings and how they contribute to a comprehensive approach of our research question.

CHAPTER I - Theoretical framework

1. Modernisation of families and personal relationships

1.1. Family change through the lens of individualisation: a critical assessment

On-going changes in family and personal life have been contributing to the pluralization of social life, either through the idea of a growing complexity of life trajectories or the diversity of personal arrangements. These changing conditions of family are demographically expressed through the rise in divorce and cohabitation, the emergence of new family forms and the postponement of parenthood, which have been impacting family formation and multiplying the possibilities of belonging. One of the perspectives that have been framing these new trends of changing intimacies in late modernity is the individualisation thesis (Beck, 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001, Giddens, 1992), which has received a massive acceptance in sociology of family over the last decades (Allan, 2008; Jallinoja & Widmer, 2011; Smart, 2004), and which has also penetrated in the public discourse (Allan, 1996). Overall, within this perspective, the authors emphasize the exercise of personal choice in the building up of relationships and portray social life as a matter of the private; detached from communal solidarities, with little space for the continuity of families and kinship support (Allan, 1996; 2001). The idea of the *solo* individual released from the institutionalisms chains is the primordial basis of analysis of individualisation theories (Kohli, 1986). Despite the fragilities of these perspectives, they have the merit of having revitalized the studies of family life and place it in the centre of the sociological research agenda, as well as emphasising the changing trends of the ways individuals live their family and personal life, as *"this approach attempted to liberate society from traditions and other normative constraints that the 'monolithic' family, or the notion of the nuclear family had previously set*" (Jallinoja & Widmer, 2011).

Following individualisation assumptions, the relationships are said to become fragile, atomized or contracted within the conjugal dyad (see *confluent love; pure relationship*) as a result of family collapse (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1992). Yet, this

conceptualization has been challenged by several studies demonstrating that family still matters for people and kinship support remains an important feature of everyday life, even if the concept of "the family" itself encloses a wide range of textures, meanings and practices (Finch, 2007; Morgan, 2011). Care practices stemming from personal networks have been empirically proved to be far from eroded, in particular, in Portuguese society, even if operating within processes of social differentiation along life-course dynamics, social class and gender lines (Wall, Aboim, Cunha & Vasconcelos, 2001). Another point of strong criticism was the idea of the democratization of relationships, for instance, between parents and child or within the couple, as gender and social class inequalities still regulate these dyads (Jamieson, 1998).

The pessimistic claims of "family crisis" are also reinforced by some myths regarding the depiction of family life in the past as highly standardized (Kohli, 2007) and marked by a strong solidarity within large webs of extended kinship with little space for friendship (Pahl & Spencer, 2004). This would contrast with present times as the privileged era of electivity (Lelievre, Vivier & Tichit, 2008). Theories of individualisation tend to oppose strong family bonds and strong family responsibilities in the past with a weak role of kinship support and care in the modern times (Smart & Shipman, 2004; Portugal, 2013). Contrastingly, various empirical studies show the persistence in modernity of family and extended kin as a source of identity, material and emotional support, in spite of the increasing trends of geographic mobility and the deinstitutionalization of conjugal relationships (Finch & Mason, 2000; Bengston, 2001). Moreover, this imaginary of the past with no diversity in the ways individuals lived their personal lives, following a highly normative model of the family and the lifecourse, has been contradicted by socio-historical research and cross-cohort data, showing how this fallacies may had contributed for the overstatement of change in contemporary societies (Kohli, 2007; Laslett et al., 1980; Lelievre, Vivier & Tichit, 2008; Jallinoja & Widmer, 2011; Nico, 2011).

Although we recognize the importance of individualisation trends, we challenge the idea of a linear transposition of these changes into the frame of personal relationships. The arguments under the umbrella of modernity theories have been tracing over general assumptions of the decline of the role of kinship in contemporary life, and have depicted these shifts in a broad and uniform way, without taking into account the historical and cultural specificities of societies (Almeida, 2003; Allan, 2001; 2008; Eisenstad, 2000; Smart, 2007). To sustain our critical view on individualisation ideas, we draw on a very interesting paper wrote by Smart

and Shipman (2004), in which the authors developed a critical assessment to individualisation premises relying on empirical findings on transnational families. In the words of Smart and Shipman (2004), the individualisation portrait of family life reflects a *monochromatic vision* of the relationship between the individual and family. The authors put forward the idea that we should think on the incorporation of changing trends in the private sphere, in a continuum which range from one point where kinship obligations and normative expectations fully shape individuals practices to the other extreme, where the individualization rational of self-determined choice-making has space to be undertaken.

Inspired by this line of thought, three main arguments can be advanced to justify our criticism. First, we agree that individualisation can be characterized as a one-dimensional thesis and culturally blind insofar as it does not consider the nuances of negotiation between tradition and modernity in family practices and values, and does not take into account the social variations. Second, modernity and individualisation are commonly seen as two processes working together at the same pace and evolving in the same direction, but we argue that the modernisation of family and intimate life does not necessarily imply moving away from families or even being completely isolated, as individualisation emphasises. Third, albeit we agree that individuals, as agents, can choose who belongs to their intimate circle, these choices are not exclusively self-determined and the idea of greater choice does not necessarily implies lack of commitment (Pahl and Spencer, 2004; 2010), nor was totally absent from the past (Lelievre, Vivier & Tichit, 2008). They are still fully conditioned by life-stage, structural (e.g., gender) and cultural factors (e.g., normative expectations, cultures of care). They are foremost contextual or relational choices (Smart & Shipman, 2004).

Notwithstanding these critical points, we do recognize that the theories of individualisation have the merit of revitalizing the studies on family life and bringing polemic issues of contemporary family life to the fore, by criticizing functional and normative family models. In fact, the complexity of family arrangements of nowadays and the growing pluralisation of life-courses are undeniable, with individuals benefiting from a relational flexibility to develop their close relationships beyond the institutionalized limits of nuclear family and co-residence (Allan, 2008; Bonvalet & Lellievre, 2013; Widmer, 2010). Still, pluralisation does not vary indeterminately as age-related processes and mechanisms of social differentiation act upon the way individuals develop and maintain their close relationships (Allan, 2008; Gouveia & Widmer, 2014: Kohli, 2007). These dynamics produce a variety of ways of building up life

trajectories and personal relationships expressed by a multiplication of possible configurations, which we aim to uncover.

Therefore, the fluidity and blurring of "family" boundaries of today drive us to place the focus on the study of personal relationships in the centre of research agenda, instead of the focus on the co-resident family unit (see Widmer & LaFarga, 2000). Actually, researchers need to cross the borders of "the Family", built upon rules of blood, marriage and co-residence, and of the heterosexual couple in their intellectual imaginaries (Déchaux, 2009; May, 2011; Roseneil & Budgeon, 2004; Wall & Gouveia, 2014). As Smart (2007) poses it, family *has come to signify the subjective meanings of intimate connections rather than formal objective blood or marriage ties* (p.34). Thus, theoretical approaches and research methods need to be adapted to capture the complexity of personal and family life and these new-old objects in late modernity. In the next section, we will briefly track the timeline and the context of evolution of the configurational approach, from more rigid models of family, passing through the individualisation pictures of personal and family life, towards interpretative and relational approaches of personal and family issues. Far from being an exhaustive history of the sociology of family, the following section constitutes our own pathway in direction to our analytical frame.

1.2. Blurring the boundaries of "the Family"

Changing trends in family and personal life have been challenging simplistic visions of "The Family", since the emergence of new relational arrangements and the complexity of individuals' everyday lives are not fully captured by classic nuclear family models of family, nor individualistic frames (May, 2011; Widmer, 2010). These changes defy not only the lay knowledge, but also the analytical frameworks of social scientists. Although relational closeness is still deeply rooted in western kinship principles - grounded on blood and marriage, genealogical proximity, bilateral filiation, co-residence and heteronormativity - , we witness a fluidity of family values and practices, and a blurring of family boundaries through friendship, ex-kin and step-kin.

The *parsonian* model of the nuclear family model prevailed in the sociological intellectual imaginary and strongly contributed for the centrality of the household as the unit of analysis in the 50's and 60's. Influenced by the early works of Burgess (1926), a functional vision of

the family prevailed, with the emphasis on the decline of family functions, and thus pushing the study of the family into the fields of social integration and modernisation. Thus, in the context of the transformations associated with the modernisation of societies, some authors argue that *nuclear family model* would be the only model that could suit in the context of the changing conditions associated with the social movements of urbanisation, and industrialisation *(*Parsons, 1943). The idea of the traditional extended family fulfilling several roles and thus, promoting the full integration of the individual would predict that the contraction of family into the nuclear core, associated with the urbanization and industrialisation processes - would drive individuals to anomy and to kinship detachment. This idea implies an evolutionary line of thinking modernity, which would also underpin individualisation theories some decades after.

The research line of Laslett and the Cambridge group was also important to consolidate the household as the unit of sociological analysis of the family. One of the reasons that can be advanced to contextualize this influence is the development of family demography and social history, since demographers began to have access and manipulate different sorts of data. The use of parish registers and the analysis of the lists of habitants and legal and notarial archives were decisive for reconstituting families (Wall, 2005). One of the main contributions of Laslett was the empirical evidence that the majority of households before the massive effects of industrialisation and urbanisation were already restricted to the nuclear family form and not extended as they were being depicted in the ideal of traditional societies (Laslett, 1972).

Particularly emerging since the 1970's, demographical indicators became to point to some changing trends in western societies, such as the rise of divorce and cohabitation, a decrease in fertility rates and age of birth of the first child, population aging, leading the acknowledgement of the 2nd Demographic Transition (Lesthaeghe, 2010). These changes were interpreted in terms of trends of individualisation and de-standardisation of family forms and life trajectories.

After a sociological disinvestment during the 80's associated with the decline of the functionalist model, the family returned to the agenda of sociological research by the hand of mainstream theorists of modernity, such as Giddens (1992) and Beck (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995). More than bringing back the interest in family life and intimacy, their perspectives provided individuals with agency and assumed "the family" as a place of change and not merely responding to changes that were taking place elsewhere "outside" in

late modernity (Smart and Neale, 1999). Family was finally being related with broader social processes from which it had somehow been segregated in the mainstream sociological thought (Morgan, 1996).

Actually, the initial concern of both authors was never "the family" itself, but the changes associated with late modernity in western societies, such as the construction of the (reflexive) self within modern and globalized societies, and the contradictions of individualism, which characterizes this era. However, the authors found it hard to theorize about these topics without taking into account what was going on in the spheres of family and intimate life.

According to Smart and Neale (1999), there are three main reasons why "the family" was rediscovered as conceptually significant and theoretically challenging during the early 90's: the changing demographical indicators which were demanding in-depth theoretical analysis and empirical developments; the appropriation of these shifts (with a diffuse explanation at the time) by different ideological standpoints, bringing it into the political debate; and finally, the interest of mainstream theorists who were dedicated to studying change in late modernity and found it impossible to theorize the social transformations which were taking place without looking at what was going on in family and intimacy.

In the case of Giddens, in particular the work developed in "The Transformation of Intimacy" (1992), the idea of individuals searching for ontological security in a globalized world, drove the author towards the sphere of intimacy (actually, he rarely uses the term family, but instead, intimacy, child-parent relationship, sexuality) relating it to wider processes of modernisation. The notions of *confluent love* and *pure relationship* are central in the explanations of the construction of the self in late modernity, thereby considering "the social" always as a product of individual agency. The main criticisms addressed to his work are mainly related to two issues (Smart and Neale, 1999): 1) these processes and life-styles are depicted as if they were universal, as if all individuals were released from constraints and institutionalisms, regardless of their ethnicity, social class, religion; even if the author recognizes that processes of differentiation act upon the access to these new lifestyles, his thoughts do not explain how these processes, for instance the pure relationship, are still shaped by the social contexts of individuals; 2) the focus on the couple and the primacy of pure relationships somehow neglects the place of children and the impact of the dissolution of the pure relationship when it is no longer satisfactory for the parents.

The work of Beck (1992) and the co-authored work with Beck-Gernsheim (1995), namely, the reflections presented in "Risk Society" and in "The Normal Chaos of Love", also contributed to theorizing family life and bringing it back to the center of wider sociological concern. These authors put forward the idea of a demise of traditional life and a blurring of gender relations, with individualism being the main driver of individuals facing the changing trends of an uncertain and risk society. The authors were concerned with the way individuals cope with the contradictions associated with individualist motivations, as love and relationships became fragile and unpredictable and "traditional bonds play only a minor role and the love between men and women has likewise proved vulnerable and prone to failure" (1995: 73)". These ambivalences place individuals in a pull-push dynamic of simultaneously running from love and seeking for it. For the authors, this is especially true for women, which, albeit free from traditional gender roles, can choose to have a job and a career, but still have to deal with work-family conciliation issues. Love is the force, but instead of Giddens' individual agency, this perspective makes individuals less aware and with less control of their lives, as love is the major force. Their understanding of the family is restricted to the couple and children, with wider kin being neglected in both works. Although norms and obligations are less strict and more negotiated, they remain significant in the everyday lives of individuals (Finch and Mason, 2000).

Parallel to these theories and refusing the predictions of individualisation thesis which state the establishment of superficial relationships and the lack of commitment in contemporary societies, several authors stress the existence of several ways of building up personal and family relationships, combining different types of ties, in which individuals are strongly committed and fulfil emotional and material needs. This line of inquiry developed a comprehensive or interpretative approach of these new ways of experiencing family and intimate life, which required an epistemological and empirical turn in sociological research, to understand families beyond household boundaries and the nuclear family. Through the adoption of different concepts and the development of different analytical strategies, scholars such as Morgan (1996; 2011), Jamieson (1998; 2011), Finch (2007), Allan (1996; 2008) and Smart (2007) in the U.K.; Singly (1992,), Kaufman (1992), Attias-Donfut (1995) and Bonvalet and Lelièvre (2013) in France; or Kellerhals *et* al (1994) and Widmer (2010) in Switzerland, all these theorists brought empirical evidence on the diversity of family and personal life under the frame of embeddedness and relationality.

Research on family meanings and practices in late modernity underlines the continued importance of the bonds of affection and support in families, but it also reveals changing sets of close relatives and a blurring between kin, non-kin and ex-kin in family networks. Personal relationships are today less dependent on marriage and blood ties, with family bonds and commitments going far beyond the nuclear co-resident family and extending across households linked by friendship, vicinity, dissolved marriages, step-parenting and care arrangements. This intertwining between familial and non-familial ties has been acknowledged in recent research on family and personal networks (Allan, 2008; Edwards and Gillies, 2012; Finch, 2007; Jamieson, Simpson & Lewis, 2011; Morgan, 2011; Widmer, 2010; Williams, 2004). Moving beyond the well-known generative mechanisms of proximity linked to partnership, biological filiation, co-residence and lineage, recent literature has focused on the crucial importance of acquaintanceship, friendship and extended kinship such as aunts, uncles and cousins (Allan, 1998, 2008; Morgan, 2010, Milardo, 2010). One of the main topics of research within this line is the pluralisation of family meaning, acknowledged by several scholars as a *process of suffusion* (Pahl and Spencer, 2010), *relational flexibility* (Allan, 2008), *diversification of family configurations* (Widmer, 2010) or *changing meanings* of family (Wall & Gouveia, 2014).

Seeking to move forward dichotomies which oppose "given (kin)" and "chosen (non-kin)", Pahl and Spencer (2004) refer to the changing nature of close ties as a process of *suffusion*, meaning the merging or blurring of kin and non-kin within networks. The authors brought empirical evidence based on qualitative research in the UK on how people construct their personal communities and how the exercise of personal choice in determining significant family members seems to be conditional upon the level of commitment in relationships, which explains why some friends are considered as family and provide support as such, whereas some relatives are not. But the opposite is also true. Some relatives, for instance siblings, can be felt as persons to confide in and considered as friends. In this sense, we can have kin and non-kinship ties playing both friend-like and family-like functions. The main challenge lies in understanding the factors which are essential to building up a certain level of commitment. Pahl and Spencer (2004) also put forward some of the criteria which people may rely on to consider a person as important. The first thing individuals take into account when perceiving a person as important is the existence of a kinship tie between them. The second criterion people mobilize is the intrinsic quality of the relationship. By this property, the authors mean the strength of the tie, the degree of dependability and support on that link,

the level of trust and confiding, and the sense of being known and accepted "as oneself". Finally, the third factor people consider is the extrinsic conditions of the relationship, which includes the duration of the tie, the frequency of contact, the sense of involvement and presence, and of sharing "things in common" (Pahl & Spencer, 2004).

However, as some authors have pointed out, despite the increased blurring of boundaries, the two domains are not totally overlapping. Both are important in personal relationships and have their own place. Kinship relationships are deeply rooted in Western societies through blood and alliance principles (Allan, 2001, 2008; Déchaux, 2009; Godelier, 2010; Pahl and Pehvalin, 2005), therefore the development of personal relationships is still strongly shaped by the principles and cultural obligations associated to kinship. Allan (2008) talks instead about an increasing *flexibility* to manage personal relationships. Family may overlap with intimacy and personal life, but family was said to remain of importance to people as a central dimension of everyday life (Allan, 2001; Edwards and Gillies, 2012; Morgan, 2001).

The configurational approach, for example, has highlighted the large array of relationships included by individuals in their family networks or "*configurations*" (Widmer, 2010). The importance of bonds beyond the central family dyads (the conjugal or the parent-child dyads) has been shown to be particularly significant for individuals dealing with the impact of critical life events, such as divorce, dependency in illness, unemployment or moving across borders (Widmer and Jallinoja, 2008; Aboim and Vasconcelos, 2009). Evidence on post-divorce families shows that they tend to build up specific family configurations including a variety of step-kin, half-brothers/sisters and ex-kin (Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1994). New family forms such as same-sex families also point to fluidity in the structuring of family relationships, with "rainbow" families of couples with children stressing both blood and non-blood relationships, both biological filiation and adoption as well as step-parenting (Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan, 2001). We witness here to a movement from family circumscribed to the household towards families seen as *configurations* of mutually interdependent persons defined by the individual (Widmer, 2010). The configurational approach will be described in detail in the next topic.

Another line of research has been focusing on family and intimate practices in contemporary societies (Morgan, 2011; Jamieson, 2012), by highlighting that "relationships are both defined and experienced by their quality and not simply by their existence" (Finch, 2007: 979-80).

Based on the assumption of "doing family" or "displaying family", these author mainly draw on qualitative research and developed analytical tools which comes close to the everyday lives of individuals and families, based on a methodological pluralism covering ethnomethodology techniques, such as participant observation, audio and video support, diaries, and resemblances studies (Jamieson, Simpson and Lewis, 2011).

Also within the study of same-sex families, Weaks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) introduced the expression of *families of choice* in opposition to *families of fate* to claim the exercise of agency in the process of selection of significant others within the set of blood, alliance and affinity ties (Weaks, Heaphy and Donovan, 2001; Weston, 1997). Actually, in "*New cultures of intimacy and care*, Roseneil and Budgeon (2004) proposed that contemporary personal life is now decentred from conjugal relationships and the confines of the domestic space, and instead, centred on friendship.

In the same line of thought, and crossing the boarders of sociology to anthropologic studies, some authors proposed that the focus of research should be on *doing kinship*, assuming kinship as a negotiated experience and not rigid genealogical systems of relationships (Schneider, 1980; Castren, 2004). The social construction of the meaning of kinship is foremost a complex articulation between blood and affinity, challenging various dichotomies, such as given and chosen, nature and culture, biology and social, and traditional and modern.

In the sociology of family, we also witness to a revitalizing of the study of kinship. Finch and Mason (2000) have pointed out three main reasons to bring the study of kinship in late modernity to the fore as a major topic of sociological research. First, there is a girth of studies that show that kinship remains relevant in everyday life, which challenge the individualisation thesis stressing the contraction of family ties and the detachment from primary bonds. A second reason highlights the importance of studying kinship and family as a way to understand broader processes and conditions on a societal level, such as the dynamics of individualisation. And finally divorce, re-partnering and other reflections of the de-institutionalization of conjugal relationships challenge the notion of kinship defined solely on genealogical principles (Finch and Mason, 2000).

Kinship has often been understood as being irreconcilable with modernity, in part because of the emphasis on the decline of family ties in contemporary societies, which has been enforced by individualisation theses (for critical reviews, see Allan, 1996; Author, 2011; Edwards and

Gillies, 2012). In view of the shifts in family and personal life, the complexification of issues related to kinship in recent decades is unquestionable. The recognition of a greater agency of individuals to construct their biographies, as well as the pluralization of the life course, have contributed to the multiplication of social circles of interactions and the possibilities of belonging in intimate life. However, the consequences of those trends for kinship salience have not yet been empirically addressed using quantitative methods on the basis of large representative samples (for exception cf. Höllinger and Haller, 1990). Correspondingly, little is known regarding the biographical, normative and structural factors that may explain the quantitative variation of the importance of kin in the context of changing intimacies (Jamieson, 1999; Allan, 2001; Pahl and Spencer, 2005; Widmer, 2011). Another limitation of the current state of the literature however holds in the low number of studies about kinship based on large representative samples, which makes it difficult to estimate the extent to which kinship is still salient in sociability practices. A related problem lies in the fact that empirical research has concentrated on either kinship or friendship relationships and not on personal networks as a whole. Kinship, friendship and other interpersonal ties should indeed be considered together if we are to understand their role in modern society (Allan, 1996; Widmer, 2004).

More recently, aiming to understand the plural meanings of "family" bonds, beyond kinship and other well-known mechanisms of proximity (e.g., co-residence), Wall and Gouveia (2014) explored the changing boundaries between close kinship ties and a wider set of relationships, such as friends, neighbours, acquaintances, work colleagues, ex-partners or more distant kin in Portuguese society. Drawing on a configurational approach to family, they found a diversity of understandings of "who is considered as family within the networks of close relationships", beyond the kinship formal status, which was fully shape by individuals' life-stage and biographical circumstances, but foremost, by the quality of the tie in what concerns to the duration, the positive role, and the history of shared co-residence. However, despite these new accommodations between blood or marriage ties and a wider array of affinities, given the ideological commitment to the family in Portuguese society and the overall emphasis on bilateral filiation and biological ties in Western society, the model of kinship to continue to strongly influence the meanings of "family" bonds. Still, family meanings are more plural, with friendship being of major importance and integrated in this family identity.

All these approaches represent an epistemological and empirical turn towards the investigation of the embeddedness of individuals in family and other significant relationships, repositioning individuals, families, friendship and kinship in the frame of relationality (Smart, 2011). However, a large proportion of sociological research on families in the last decade interprets new family arrangements in the light of individualisation theses, turning away from the concept of family itself (Edwards and Gillies, 2012). We need to challenge these mainstream interpretations of change in personal life by understanding kinship and family in their social context, i.e., by looking at the belongingness and interdependencies created by individuals within their personal networks, which are developed in the context of social structures, family circumstances, and life course pathways (Allan, 1998, 2001).

2. Relationality, social network analysis and configurational approach

2.1. Social networks and the (re)emergence of a reticular paradigm

The configurational perspective is a meso-level theory based on a reticular logic, distancing itself from more individualistic perspectives on families and relationships. The adoption of this relational approach to family and intimate life was fully influenced by a vast patrimony of previous studies developed within the fields of social psychology, anthropology, history, and sociology. These approaches develop their work under the umbrella of the relational paradigm, emphasizing the importance of studying not only the network members' attributes, but most of all, the complex interactions between them. Thus, social interaction is the unit of analysis, not the individual.

In its basic assumption, we understand social network as "an ensemble of social units and relationships, direct or indirect, between those social units, through chains of variables size" (Mercklé, 2004, p.4). However, we can put forward some of the multiple adjacent concepts which derive implicitly or explicitly from a common effort of conceiving families, communities or societies as networks instead of well-defined groups, namely: *primary group*, i.e. the group of individuals (family, friends, neighbours) who are characterized by cooperation and intimate face-to-face contact, which are characterized both by love and harmony, but also by conflict (Cooley, 1909); *significant other or others*, a notion developed

by the symbolic interactionism, referring to the sets of intimate persons who are mutually committed and who are capable of shaping the self of the individual (Berger & Luckman, 1966); *attachment networks* (Bowlby, 1971); *interpersonal relationships* (Heider, 1958); *entourage* (Bonvalet and Lelièvre, 2013); *personal communities* (Wellman et al, 1997; Pahl and Spencer, 2004); *reference group* (Kuhn, 1964); *psychological or networks of intimates,* emphasising the relationships between the emotional and cognitive dimensions of personal networks (Milardo, 1988); or *strong ties,* in opposition to weak ties, to define the interpersonal ties belonging to a small circle of interaction, such as friends and family, which are characterized by frequent contact, durability and shared intimacy (Granovetter, 1973)

Dissecting the communalities between these concepts, we may understand close relationships as the ensemble of interdependent persons which are socially, cognitively and emotionally interdependent, in which the social actor is the center. They provide sociability, support and affection, a sense of belonging, but also can potentiate conflict. These notions suggest the importance of looking not only to composition and structure, but also to the quality of the relationships, as well as for the structure of opportunities and constrains within it.

The Social Network Analysis (SNA) refers to an ensemble of methods, concepts and theories, transversal to social sciences, which aim to develop an approach focused on relationships instead of the attribute-based studies (Scott, 2000; Mercklè, 2004). This approach represents a shift on the study of social phenomena, in the sense that postulates a reticular rational (Boissevain, 1979; Portugal, 2007), providing the integration of the micro (individual) and the macro (societal) levels at a meso-level: the relational space (la Rùa, 2007; Azaran, 2010). In fact, Boissevain (1979) identified the main reason or the growing popularization and dissemination of this approach as a valuable analytical tool: 1) the systematic focus on the connections between the units of analysis; 2) the assumption of interdependency between those units; 3) the integration of macro and micro level, and the part with the whole; 5) assuming the circulation of goods, the possibility for studying the social tensions between individuals who have unequal access to resources 6) the attribution of a dynamic nature to society by giving a human dimension to those dynamics; 7) to overcome the conceptual barriers of institutionalized models and approaches; 8) the possibility of deal with forms of social organization which emerge from social interaction (e.g., families); 9) the humanization of social analysis, re-introducing individuals and their relationships in centre of research; e 10) to overcome the empirical barrier of reaching friends through friends.

Wasserman e Faust (1999) outlined the principles of SNA, which should be taken into account by the researcher: 1) the actors and its actions cannot be understood as autonomous and detached from each other, but they are interdependent; 2) the relational ties between the actors are channels of circulations of material and immaterial flows/resources; 3) the models centered on individuals conceive the structure of relationships as means which configure opportunities and constraints to individuals action; and 4) the network models conceive structure (social, economic ..) as constant patterns of relationships between the actors (p.4).

The relational nature of human life and the interdependency assumption assumes that individuals are linked to each other through mutual influence and reciprocal determination (Simmel, 2006, p.17). This notion brings us close to the concept of configuration.

2.2. Configurational approach

The *configurational approach* is an emergent line of inquiry which has been combining the principles and tools of *social network analysis* with the life-course perspective to encompass the complexities of family arrangements and personal relationships in late modernity. Intending to overcome the inadequacy of some classic models of the family in the sociology of family, mainly grounded on the representation of family as a group of individuals living in the same household (*ménage*), the *configurational perspective* appears as a new outlook by framing families as networks of significant others, who are linked and committed by principles that go well beyond kinship and co-residence. Therefore, the theoretical developments and empirical research under this approach have been growing in the last decades as a comprehensive approach of family and intimate life by studying the complex relationships occurring in these relational sets (Kellerhals et al, 2005; Widmer and Jallinoja, 2008; Widmer, 2010). While a variety of definitions of the term personal networks have been suggested, this study uses the "metaphor"/ concept of configuration suggested by Widmer (2010), who was inspired by the work of Moreno (1934) and Elias (1990). To explain what the author means by configuration, he draws upon the notion of Moreno and Elias, defining it as *the structure of mutual oriented and dependent people in which each member fulfils some of the others' needs for social recognition, power, emotional proximity, financial and practical resources*. The tonic is thus placed in the idea of interdependency (Elias, 1990).

The notion of *configuration* was introduced by Moreno in the 30's, which defined it as a collection of individuals of variable dimension, ranging from small networks – which the author called social atoms, to the humanity in general, in which individuals are linked through symbolic ties (Moreno, 1934). Later on, during the 80's and 90's, Norbert Elias brought an innovative perspective on the relationship between individuals and society, refusing to conceive the social world with individuals in one side and society on the other. Instead, Elias underlines the importance of *interdependency* or inter-relation between individuals, denying the mental polarized ideals of subject/object, exteriority/interiority and individual/society. The author framed the relational space, i.e. the system of coordinates which define the situation of the individual in relation to others, in a given time, as configurations of interdependent individuals. Actually, as some authors pointed out, Elias thought the social world as a network of relationships, introducing a relational way of reasoning (Chartier, 1985). This is in line with what we have been calling as relationality.

Norbert Elias defined the concept of configuration as *"a structure of mutual and dependent people*" (Elias, 1990, p.249), which fulfill the needs of power, support, intimacy, and identification, among others (Quintaneiro, 2005), in a way that what happens within configurations produces effects on all elements and thus influence their behaviors. The notion of configuration was thus appropriated by some authors in the sociology of family to stress the dynamic and interdependent character of family and personal relationships, as this conception provide an effective way of understanding the internal functioning and the complexity of arrangements beyond the limits of kinships and co-residence (Widmer & La Farga, 2000; Widmer, 2010).

Drawing on a *configurational perspective* of family and personal life requires the adoption of some assumptions that should be taken into account by the researcher. First, there must be a *rejection of institutionalized criteria*, such as co-residence or family roles to define family; and its replacement by the focus on the interdependencies within the set of significant others defined by the individual. Second, dyads, such as couples or parent-child bond, are not located in a free-floating space, but they can only be understood by considering their *embeddedness on the surrounding relationships*. And finally, the integration of *space* and *time* is a core dimension to study changes and continuities over the life-course and historical periods (Widmer, 2010).

2.3. Framing social capital through a configurational perspective

Family and other close relationships play an integrative function for individuals to face everyday demands over the multiple domains of social life. Personal networks can be framed as a valuable source of social capital resulting from the complex interdependencies developed between their members during life, but may also create new ways of social exclusion along social class, gender and life-stage (Wall et al., 2001; Phillipson, Allan and Morgan, 2004). In fact, de study of social capital brings important issues into critical debate on topics such as the supposed decline of family in the so-called risk society and liquid modernity; the protective role of social networks at facing the changing conditions associated with the social and economic crisis; and the interplay between social networks and the welfare-state, namely the compensation of policies fragilities by the action of informal solidarities (Portugal, 2013).

Relational closeness is constructed through a subjective but also a material dimension, as people to whom we feel close and strongly committed can either provide practical support to buffer the demands of everyday life. Although the focus of social networks' studies usually lays on solidarity, tensions and ambivalence also take place within the context of close relationships (Lusher, 2002; Connidis, 2010; Widmer, 2010). When interdependencies are quite intense, they generate mutual expectations and obligations between individuals who are strongly engaged to each other, potentiating consensus in ideas and behaviours. Shared values and beliefs may facilitate cooperation and the creation of an identity; therefore there is a pressure towards attitudinal homogeneity which in turn, fosters spaces of normative control. This regulative dimension of social capital in personal relationships – which we defined as normative - emerges as the third side of the triangle, already composed by the instrumental and the expressive function. In case of more sparsely connected networks, although the support is not so effective, the autonomy of the individuals and the access to different types of settings and information open spaces for new ideas, and hence diminish the pressure towards normative homogenization (Surra and Milardo, 1988; Widmer, 2010).

Contrary to perspectives which conceive social capital as either an individual or collective attribute, the configurational approach stands at a meso-level, as it assumes a relational starting point of social capital – the embeddedness of the individual in the configurations of personal relationships. Thus, to understand the mobilization of social capital through a

configurational approach, not only matters to capture the dyadic support which takes place between the individual and his/her significant others, but foremost, it is crucial to map the whole structure of connections in which these exchanges are immersed. The way in which interaction and support are organized within personal configurations has implications for what happens in key family dyads, be it between partners, siblings, parents and children, or between close friends (*linked lives*).

We adopt a *contextual* and *relational* view of social capital, as both external and internal milieus shape the way individuals give and provide resources. In other words, the uses of social capital are shaped by individuals' *external context* as they are contingent to age and life transitions, social-structural conditions of living, the normative background and family-biographical circumstances. And on the other hand, the exchanges of support are intimately linked to the architecture of individual's *relational context*. The salience and combination of different ties (e.g.; kin/non-kin tie, ascendant/descendant orientation, uni/multi-generational) and the relational structure of the configuration (e.g., highly dense and cohesive or/and loosely and sparsely connected) fully constrain or potentiate support. Thus, the composition of personal configurations is determinant for the type of social capital provided.

As previously mentioned, individuals may have access to different kinds of resources through their networks. One of the analytical dimensions which are commonly considered to characterize social capital is *multiplexity*. Multiplexity is understood as the existence of overlapping exchanges and affiliations within a network of relationships and therefore, indicates the plurality of resources existing in one tie or network. Therefore, configurations of close relationships can fulfil different types of support, by including people who provide different or overlapping types of support. Traditionally, friends are known to be confidents and providers of emotional help, whereas relatives are more likely to exchange practical support. Our point of departure is not to consider friendship and kinship relations in a separate manner, but to look at the personal networks as a whole. In our analysis, we aim to complexify the notion of multiplexity, by going beyond the dichotomy of expressive vs. instrumental support and adding other dimensions, such as reciprocity, network functional specialization, potential and active support, etc... The exchanges can be reciprocal or not, in a long or short term, as well as people can give one type of support and receive in another. Multiplexity is an analytical dimension which indicates the plurality of resources in one tie or network (Degenne and Forse, 1994).

Little is known about life course patterns of social capital—i.e., resources embedded within social relationships (Lin 2001; Gray, 2009; McDonald, 2010) and the accumulation of social capital over life, as suggested by authors under the model of cumulative (dis)advantages (O'Rand, 2009; Aboim and Vasconcelos, 2009)

Social capital, as a concept, has been given growing currency within social sciences, also penetrating the common sense, a phenomenon which has been accompanied by some controversy regarding its ambiguous and circular definition (Portes, 2000). These polemics revolve around the unclear distinction between antecedents and consequences of social capital and the increasing number of measures that are proliferating without the same development at the level of conceptualization (Portes, 2000). Despite the multidimensionality of the term, the different conceptualizations share the assumption of the existence of other capital different from the economic one (Widmer, 2006). Its individual or collective/public nature has also been in the heart of the distinct formulations of the concept and consequently on the type of indicators and measurements. Deriving from a bourdien perspective, social capital is classically defined as *"resources stemming from the possession of a durable network of acquaintance or recognition"* (Bourdieu, 1985). Other prominent figures in the field of social capital, such as Coleman (1987) and Putman (1995) have emphasised the importance of social capital for the integration of individuals in community and social life, despite their differential conception of its individual or collective nature. Actually ist has been consensual among the authors who study social capital that three major lined stood out as important.

Indeed, in the 1980s and 1990s, Pierre Bourdieu (1985), James Coleman (1987) and Robert Putnam (1995) were responsible for the diffusion and use of the concept within the social sciences, even if their theoretical and empirical lens derived from different social paradigms. Despite their distinct orientations, they shared the assumption of the existence of a human capital which individuals have access in virtue of belonging to social networks or other social structures (Portes, 1998).

Bourdieu examined the way in which economic, cultural and social forms of capital strongly influenced patterns of power and social status. Following a more individual perspective, Coleman (1987) explored the way in which social capital could contribute for the development of young people, especially the impact on educational outcomes. And finally, Putnam (1995) placed the concept into a wider and macro level of the political sphere, as an

argument to support the decline of 'civic and community engagement' in contrast with rising levels of crime and anti-social behaviour within urban areas in American society.

The configurational perspective conceives social capital as the resources stemming from the patterns of interdependencies emerging from family and personal networks (significant ties). In this sense, social capital is understood in a relational perspective, putting the emphasis on the quality of social relations at a *meso* level (Smart, 2011; Rossi et al, 2011).

Following this line of thought, social capital is seen as the very social relationship when it is viewed as a resource for the individuals or society (Rossi et al, 2011). We would add that social capital can be seen in the arrangement of these every social relationships. This assumption allow us to put the "individuals embeddedness in personal networks" at the centre of the analysis of social capital, avoiding the individualism and utilitarian/instrumental visions for what some other use of social capital has been criticized (Portes, 2000; Mercklé, 2004). Contrary to a utilitarian vision of resources' activation, which would be in line with the idea of detached and self-oriented actors in late modernity preconized by individualisation thesis.

The configurational perspective has been focus on the configurations of significant family members, and therefore, the empirical studies draw on family based social capital. Family social capital is a quality of the social relations which derives from the ties among family members and assumes the character of living memory of those relationships, conferring them a distinguishing subjectivity (Prandini et al., 2007). It is a mutual orientation among family member's webs of interdependencies, based on gift and expectation becoming a really family *modus vivendi* (Rossi et al, 2011). It is responsible for the creation of reliable bonds, based on gift and reciprocity, which in turn are able to produce cooperation-oriented behaviour.

Our discussion on the validation of the argument of the supposed decline of family salience in the relational life of individuals in the changing context of family and intimate life in late modernity, drive us to broader the unit of analysis from the significant family members in direction to a wider relational arena of personal relationships. Thus, it is fundamental to tackle the potential of personal configurations for individual's social integration through the study of social capital provided not just by families, but by other close bonds (Widmer, 2006).

Families are often considered an example of thick and cohesive social capital, a homogeneous group that contribute to the social integration (Carlo and Widmer, 2011). However, the

complexity of contemporary families questions this set of assumptions and suggests that social capital is an individualized resource in families of late modernity. Social capital is not limited to the household but cross generational lines and types of affiliations developing long-lasting interdependencies. Also personal configurations, which are thought to be more diversified and in which there is a complex intertwine between kinship ties and amity ties, such as friends can also drive to more diversified patterns of social capital. A recently body of empirical research has underlined the importance of family relationships as social capital (Furstenberg and Hughes, 1995; Furstenberg & Kaplan, 2004). In the same way family connections (family-based social capital) are proved to have various benefits for individuals, such as promoting physical and psychological health or increasing individual resilience against critical events of the life course (Furstenberg and Hughes, 1995; Furstenberg and Kaplan, 2004; Widmer, Kellerhals, and Levy, 2004; Widmer, 2004), we believe that close personal relationships also play a significant contribution for individuals' wellbeing and resilience, alongside with other consequences, such as social control.

2.4. Bridging and bonding

A classical distinction on the structure of social capital opposes bonding and bridging social capital. This is important for the present study as the supposed individualisation of personal relationships and the decay of the integrative function of families would subsequently have a negative impact for the social integration of the isolated individual. However, the configurational perspective came to show how the diversity of arrangements beyond the nuclear family can generate different patterns of relationships and therefore, produce different types of social capital. The bonding and bridging type varies with the type of arrangement, as the structure fosters different degrees of ego's autonomy and dependence/connectivity on their significant others.

A great part of the work on the topic is based on a definition of social capital in terms of network closure (Coleman, 1988). In dense networks, most individuals are interconnected and coordinate their efforts to supply the needs of each other. However, these dynamics also enhance expectations, obligations, and trust among their members due to the pressure towards homogeneity of behaviour and beliefs. This favours normative control. From this perspective, social capital is to be found in family "configurations" (Elias, 1978; Widmer, 2010) in which

most if not all individuals are interconnected by highly significant relationships. This type of social capital is defined as bonding.

However, individualisation trends and the pluralization of life courses and family arrangements are thought to jeopardize these assumptions of cohesion, and conduct us to think within another frame of social capital. Contrary to the vision of the positive outcomes of highly connected networks, the perspective of structural holes came to advocates that the potential of social capital lies in the bridging and brokerage opportunities and not on the bonding connections. Burt (1995, 2001) conceive this potential as: the weaker connections between subgroups of a network create "holes" in the structure which provide some persons - brokers - with opportunities to mediate the flow of information between group members and hence control the projects that bring them together (Burt, 2001). However, the role played by individuals who place/find themselves in a brokerage position requires a strong investment in time, energy and sociability in order to potentiate/enhance and sustain discrepant personal connections. Translating this alternative way of looking at the patterns of connectedness to family and intimate lives, this idea can challenge some assumptions of family interdependency as highly dense and strongly bonded/cohesive. On the other hand, it can also help us to better understand the degree of individualisation of personal networks. Studies on siblingship, in-laws (Coleman, Ganong and Cable, 1997; Fischer, 1983; Yi, 1986 Stein, Bush, Ross, & Ward, 1992), step-families (Cicirelli, 1995; Castren, 2004), elective relationships and blurring of the boundaries between family and friendsship (Allan, 2008; Beloti, 2007; Pahl and Spencer, 2004), same-sex families (Weston. 1997). In summary, it seems that some type of family configurations provide a bridging type of social capital, associated with a relatively low density of connections among family members and a high level of individual autonomy.

Putnam (2000, p.22) also enunciates the distinction as following: *Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups…Other networks are outward looking and encompass across diverse social cleavages…Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising social solidarity. Dense networks in ethnic enclaves, for example, provide crucial social and psychological support for less fortunate members of the community… Bridging networks, in contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion… Bonding social capital is good for 'getting by', but bridging social capital is crucial for*

'getting ahead'. Moreover, bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocities, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves.

Accordingly, following the findings of Widmer (2006), two lines of inquiry underline the linkages between the shape of personal networks and the type of social capital available: bonding and bridging social capital. From these two approaches stem different consequences in terms of the level of integration of individuals, as well as their level of autonomy and social control inside the network in which they are embedded (Widmer, 2006; 2010). The proportion of friends and family members that individuals have in their networks and the level of integration of the formers in the kinship set of relationships are likely to have important effects on the structural characteristics of networks, such as density and transitivity, as friends and relatives are often not directly connected. As people consider their close persons as significant others, i.e., individuals who has been deeply influential in one's life and in whom one is emotionally invested (Andersen & Chen, 2002), it is expected that people are engaged in exchanges of material and symbolic support. In this sense, social capital can be measured based on the emotional support perceived as available inside configurations. It is precisely in this assumption that rely various empirical studies dealing with social capital in family arrangements and social networks. They claim that the composition of networks, specially, the salience of blood, alliance and amity ties shapes the type of social capital, in the sense that the inclusion of friends and other non-kin in this significant relational contexts have a strong impact on the personal configurations, and thus on the social capital that is available to individuals.

Widmer (2006) has drawn on social networks analysis (SNA) methods, in particular, the use of sociometric measures and structural indicators to study the patterns of social capital. From a sociological perspective, network analysis approach has been used to explore the impact of informal ties both emotionally for the individual and for patterns of social organization more generally; as well as the role of networks in the provision of support and the implications for public policy (Phillipson, Allan and Morgan, 2004). The development of sophisticated *softwares* (eg., UciNet) and sociometric instruments (eg. Family Network Method) enable the compute of several types of structural indicators (eg., density, transitivity and centrality), which help us to identify the patterns of social capital.

2.5. Multiplexity and rules of exchange in family networks

As mentioned elsewhere, the relationships between the individuals and his/her personal network take place at three levels: expressive, normative and instrumental (Coenen-Huther, Kellerhals and Von Allmen, 1994). The study of Elizabeth Bott (1976) on family and social networks was pioneer in capturing these interrelated dimensions. Based on a qualitative survey with 20 working-class families in post-war London, the author could draw a linkage between the composition of the conjugal networks, the degree of connectedness between the members, and the gender role segregation in the couple. In close knit networks, where everyone knew and interacted with each other, the exchange of support is strong but also the pressure towards conformity is high. In these cases, there is also a rigid segregation of roles between partners, instead of joined activities and support. Social class, geographic mobility and the composition of networks, by including relatives or friends, were found as playing a key role on the type of social network.

Empirical studies on the role of kinship and informal solidarities in contemporary societies have been identifying the implicit or explicit norms which regulate the provision of mutual support. From the classical studies of Marcel Mauss (1988) to more recent research lines all over Europe and America, such as the work of Coenen-Huther and Kellerhals (1995) in Switzerland, Attias-Donfut (1995) in France, Ulla Bjonberg in Scandinavia, Janet Finch and Jennifer Mason (1993) in the U.K., Vern Bengston (1995) in the U.S. and Ingrid Connidis (2010) in Canada, and Karin Wall (2001; 2014) and Silvia Portugal (2006; 2014) in the nation contex, all these works recognized some transversal dimensions in practices of care in western societies.

Two mains dimensions are transversal to these cultures: the centrality of blood ties and the vertical descendent direction of support in the genealogical structure. The support flows mainly in a vertical orientation in spite of horizontal orientation, with the exceptions of the exchanges between siblings (Kellerhals, 1988; Wall et al., 2001; Portugal, 2007). Lateralization is also relevant, as the wife's genealogical side is more frequently invested than the husband's side (Wall et al, 2001). Another core issues is the genderification of support: women are keener to provide assistance in services and care and with material support; whereas men are main providers of financial and patrimonial help (Vasconcelos, 2005). Blood

and dyads parent-child, in particular, mother and daughter, are central dyads in the regulation of support. Other analytical dimensions are often added to the analysis of the circulation of support, namely, multiplexity, transitivity, polarization, and connectivity.

In the national context, Wall *et* al. (2001) found the reproduction of inequality through the action of informal solidarities through gender, lifecourse and social class lines of differentiation. Moreover, regarding the volume of support, these authors also found that exchanges were more occasional than intense. Portugal (2006) also studied the norms which regulate the exchange of resources in personal networks in Portuguese society, based on a qualitative survey on the role of social networks on the provision of welfare. The author found the continuity of practices of gift in the exchange of support in social networks but operating in a very complex way, in what she defined as "old practices of care framed by a new discourse" (Portugal, 2014). The author found that obligations are strongly rooted in kinship ties, with a strict opposition of family v. others. Still, individuals avoided or refused to consider support as an obligation, by attributing an emotional dimension of affection, retribution, collaboration, sharing, and generosity.

3. The dimension of *time*: contributes from the lifecourse perspective

The plurality of personal configurations can only be understood by adopting a *lifecourse perspective*. Few studies have been linking the changes in personal networks to age-related processes, but "time" constitutes an analytical dimension that must be incorporated in the study of personal networks since they are not static entities (McDonald and Mair, 2010). Instead, relationships evolve along the life of individuals as they are contingent to transitions and critical events (Fisher and Oliker, 1983; Bidart and Lavenu, 2005; Widmer, 2010). The birth of a child, migration, unemployment, widowhood, divorce or retirement are major experiences that may open or constrain sociability in different timing, and fully shape the nature and the dynamics of the web of relationships in which individuals are engaged. A more traditional body of research has focused on a snapshot of networks without taking into account the morphological transformations over the life-course. Moreover, not just age and the life-stage are important, but also generational time is a dimension of research that fully accounts for the way individuals develop their personal life.

The lifecourse theory has gained prominence among social sciences and crossing disciplinary boundaries as an emergent paradigm over the past 40 years. The main concern of this perspective is to understand how social change alters people's lives, by studying the interplay between social-historical time and personal-biographical time. According to Elder *et*. al (2003), one of the main contributors of the development of this perspective, five principles or key-ideas guide the theoretical and empirical development in lifecourse theories: the principle of *life-span development*; the principle of *agency*; the principle of *time and space*; the principle of *timing*; and the principle of *linked lives*. The first principle puts forward the idea that aging is a long-life process which does not end with adolescence, but lasts till the death of the person. This implies that lifecourse studies benefit from the study of the whole life-span of individuals. The possibility of following the trajectory of an individual over time (longitudinal studies) or the study of different age-groups (cross-cohort designs) enables the researcher to better understand the interplay of social change and individual development. The second principle recognizes the agency of the individual to construct his/her own biography through choice-making and planning within the context of constraints and opportunities provided by social and generational time. As we said before, in our view, it is always a contextual and relational choice. The third principle stresses the importance of placing individuals in historical time and place (political, economic, geographic, cultural conditions). The forth principle highlights the importance of the timing/calendar of the experiencing of an event or transition as it can affect people in different ways depending on when they occur in their lifecourse (duration, synchrony, sequence and reversibility are core dimensions to characterize transitions). Finally, the most bridging concept with the configurational approach is the principle of interdependency or linked lives. Individuals live their lives interdependently with their significant others. A critical event or transition in the life of one individual may require the experience of a transition or adjustments in the life of others with whom he/she is mutually committed. Specially reinforced in the *linked lives principle*, lifecourse studies assume that individuals cannot be understood as detached/removed from their interpersonal context/entourage, as individual lives are deeply embedded in social relationships. Family members are interconnected over life trajectories and generational relationships. But this principle also applies to the interconnections among the multiple spheres of life, as education, work, geographical mobility, health, and family formation tightly intersect over the lifecourse. This idea of interdependency is also the assumption of the configurational approach.

Preeminent authors within the field of lifecourse perspectives have been engaging in a critical appraisal of current themes such as the individualisation, differentiation, deinstitutionalisation and (de)standardisation of the lifecourse, concepts which are often arbitrarily applied in the lifecourse debates (Kohli, 2007; Bruckner and Meyer, 2005; Heinz and Kruger, 2001; Blossfield, 2009). These discussions and essays are fundamental to study of the diversification of personal networks.

3.1. Combining the lifecourse and the configurational perspectives

Combining the principles of lifecourse perspective with the assumptions of the configurational approach, we can understand how the two frameworks are articulated in this work (table 1).

Table 1 Articulation of configurational and lifecourse principles

Configurational perspective	Lifecourse theories	How we adopted the principles in this study
Refusal of institutionalized criteria to define family	*Agency*	Instead of defining a priori the family as the main relational structure, we asked ego to define the network of close relationships, (Ego-centred technique). We consider agency as contextual, by taking into account the aging, structural, biographical and normative constraints of choice, alongside with selectivity and flexibility
Integration of space and time to study changes and continuities over the life-course and historical periods	*Life-span development*	We assumed that the diversification of personal relationships does not end with the transition to adulthood, but evolves through middle and old age. Thus, we consider three birth-cohorts, which represent different stages of the lifecourse
	Time and space	We conceive birth-cohort as a intertwining of generational and biographical time. Thus, individuals are both situated within their historical backgrounds and by their life stage. Individuals are also situated in their physical and symbolic space (structural, normative)

	Timing	The map of personal networks is a snapshot of a particular moment in individuals' lives, meaning that the moment of data collection is determinant to understand the characteristics of the configurations. We also consider the timing of certain biographical transitions (ending school, entry labour market, leaving parental home, entry into conjugality and parenthood) and family circumstances to reveal the impact of calendars on the present relational arrangements.
Dyads and families can only be understood by considering their embeddedness in the surrounding relationships	*Linked lives*	We assume that individuals and families can only be understood through the embeddedness in their immediate relational contexts, i.e., by studying their personal networks. Individuals are emotionally and materially interdependent, thus, an event in the life of one member impacts the lives of the others. Individuals are committed through principles of kinship, residence, and generational proximity, as well as other functional principles -> social capital

3.2. Empirical studies on personal and family networks

In the following, we will present an overview of national and international studies, which aimed to systematically analyse the diversity of personal and family networks by creating typologies based on the attributes of its members and on the dynamics of sociability and exchange of resources. Despite sampling and analytical differences, they also have the common goal of uncovering the diversity of personal networks through the perspective of the individual. The majority of these studies were grounded in interviews. Thus, their qualitative nature cannot guarantee the extension and generalization of the typologies to Portuguese society. Still, these studies inspired us to gain some understanding of the dimensions/aspects we may consider to identify different types of networks. We will briefly present the ideal-types of family and personal networks, and the analytical dimensions that were considered by the authors to set the morphological profiles.

Aiming to understand the way people construct their personal communities by combining chosen and given ties, which can be either friends or relatives, Pahl and Spencer (2004) developed a qualitative research survey based on a purposive sample of 60 young care leavers

and people with mental health problems in U.K.. The authors found six types of "personal communities", based on the centrality and proportion of friends and relatives within it, and according to the type of friendship repertoires. *Friend-like* personal communities contain more friends than relatives, with long-lasting friendships being central along with close relatives. *Friend-enveloped* communities are also predominantly composed by friends, who provide social support, but they are not as central as in the previous type. The centrality is placed on the partner and children. In *family-like* communities, family members outnumber friends. Friends are also present, but in a more peripheral position. *Family-dependent* are mainly constituted by relatives and some friends, who are mostly tied to the individual by leisure activities. And finally, *partner-based* and *professional-based* are restricted to partner and co-workers, with friends and other relatives playing a minor role. This typology combines the proportion of types of ties and their degree of closeness with ego, as well as the status of friends as buddies or family-like friends. This work problematizes the dual thinking regarding the nature of close ties, which often assumes the normatively prescribed nature of kinship ties as "given"; and the purely elective and affinity-based nature of non-kin ties, such as friends, as chosen. It also reveals how the meanings of family are not circumscribed to kinship rules as the construction of personal relationships is furthermost conditional upon the level of closeness and support shared between the individual and his/her significant others.

Following a tradition of the Swiss sociology of family led by Kellerhals and colleagues, Widmer (2010) developed several studies on the diversity of family configurations beyond the limits of the household. The typology construction is based on the composition of the configurations in terms of the predominant types of tie. Using a sample of 229 American college students, he found that early adults construct their family configurations within a wide range of arrangements that go beyond the nuclear family. Seven types of configurations were identified: the beanpole, the friendship, the post-divorce, the conjugal, the mother-oriented, the father-oriented, and the siblings. Replicating the same study in Switzerland, with a sample of 101 women living in conjugality and having at least one co-resident child between age of 6 and 15, the author found quite the same patterns of configurations: the beanpole, the conjugal, the brother-side, the sister-side, the nuclear, the post-divorce, and the kinship. Despite some nuances linked to the life-cycle, we will briefly describe the major configurations found in the two studies. The *beanpole* configuration is characterized by the existence of several generations but few individuals in each one. This arrangement is organized according to a vertical orientation: grandparents, partner, children and grandchildren. The *friendship*

configuration is very similar to the beanpole but it is open to friends, which are cited in the same proportion as family members. The *post-divorce* configuration expresses the re-composition of families after conjugal rupture. It may include former relatives, such as the previous spouses and in-laws, and the current partner, the biological children and step-children, etc. The *conjugal* configuration is composed by the alliance members: the couple and the parents from both sides. The *siblings'* configuration is made up of siblings and relatives who are related to siblings, such as siblings in-law, nephews, nieces, cousins, etc. The last two following configurations are based on the laterality of the genealogical link. The *mother-oriented* is mainly composed of relatives from the mother's side and the *father-oriented* is mainly composed by relatives from the father's side. The same configurations were found in a sample of women during the parental stage, with the exception of the two last ones. Additionally, four other types were identified: the nuclear, the kinship, the sister-oriented and the brother-oriented. The *nuclear* configuration is composed of the co-resident family of procreation: partner and children. The siblings configuration found at the early stage of the lifecourse appears in this sample as more specialized into *sister-oriented* and *brother-oriented*, composed of the sibling and his/her family, and some friends. The *kinship* is a large configuration of distant relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, nephews, cousins. This set of empirical studies brings important evidence on the plurality of ways of building up family relationships outside the limits of biological and legal bonds, and beyond co-residence principles. It also shows the multiple configurations of significant family ties through the articulation of primary and extended kin and of relatives and friends; but it also reveals how these combinations are regulated by genealogical and gender preferences. Lifecourse transitions and critical events are of particular importance to shape family configurations. The possibility of choosing who counts as relative produces a subjective definition of the meaningful family context, which is more accurate and close to individuals' everyday lives. This innovative approach represents an effort of the sociology of family to encompass the changes operating on its privileged object of research: families.

On the other hand, findings from Widmer's studies (2010) in Switzerland also suggest that, although family trajectories in late modernity are more varied and complex, individuals organize their personal interdependencies within a limited number of actively structured networks. With a few differences according to three different life stages (young adulthood, parenthood, post-divorce or remarriage), *beanpole*, *friendship*, *post-divorce*, *conjugal*, *kinship* and *sibling* family configurations seem to be some of the main types of networks organized

by individuals, revealing a complex process of suffusion between close and distant kin, ex-kin and non-kin.

At the national level, so far this perspective on family configurations has only been empirically adopted by some authors using a qualitative approach. Aiming to investigate the role of family and social networks in the provision of welfare, Silvia Portugal (2006) interviewed 60 individuals aging from 25 to 34 years old, and living in conjugality with or without children. Despite the diversity of configurations, some common structuring dimensions stood out: a clear-cut separation between relatives, on whom you can count for a variety of situations and support, and the others (non-kin), seen as non-trustful and conflictive; and the mechanism of homophily as strongly shaping the network composition. She captured four ideal-types of family configurations according to the size, the overlap of functions and the types of ties, with a particular focus on the strength of the tie. The *encapsulated networks* are composed of close kin, mainly members of the family of orientation and procreation. Within this configuration, there is a strict separation between family and others, with relatives fulfilling the affective and instrumental needs (flowing mainly from the woman's genealogical side), as well as monopolizing the circles of sociability; whereas all those ties outside the family realm are seen as non-trustful. These configurations are mainly associated with women, with lower levels of education, working in non-skilled occupations and residing in rural or semi-urban areas. The *selective* configurations are also centered on kinship ties, the main providers of material and emotional support, but there are also some friends that are perceived as intimate or even considered as family. The word selective is thus linked with this criterion of selection of intimates who blur the family boundaries. These configurations are associated with both men and women, with average and high levels of education, working in qualified occupations in the education, health and administrative fields, and residing in urban areas. The *open* configurations are more diverse in terms of composition as they join kin and non-kin. The core of close/strong ties is small and restricted to family and friends, while the pool of weak ties is large. Instrumental help also flows from these weak connections, with the source depending on the type of support needed. These configurations are mainly associated with men with highly mobile trajectories and with long educational careers, which have contributed to the diversification of circles of sociability. They are mainly independent workers or executives/managerial residing in urban or semi-urban areas. Finally, the *affinity-based configurations* are distinct from the previous ones insofar they do not focus on kinship and principles of consanguinity. They are foremost

affective, which is the main criterion of belonging. Family support is rare and the affective and geographic proximity with relatives is low. Friends play overlapping functions since they can provide both expressive and material support. These configurations are associated with both men and women, with the secondary levels of education, working in services, and residing away from their relatives. This work brings to the fore important dimensions to understand the modes of construction of social networks in Portuguese society and the articulation with the welfare state functioning. First, it highlights the importance of taking into account the composition (type of tie, strength of the tie; sex; and genealogical side) and structure (emotional, material, etc.) of the networks to better understand their morphology; and the way these two dimensions are interconnected in the sense that the definition of who is included is related to the type of support, and vice-versa. Second, the distribution of these morphological ideal-types by social profiles show how these processes are not random, but are fully shaped by class, gender, and family trajectories. Lastly, one of the main contributions of this work is the articulation of the meso-level of informal networks with the macro-level of society as it offers an appraisal of how social networks compensate for welfare state's shortcomings or, instead, reinforce social pre-existent inequalities.

Wall, Aboim and Marinho (2010) identified the main configurations of men living in a first partnership with dependent children, by examining their personal narratives on the practices of interaction with others. Linking the male individual's life trajectories, the patterns of connections between the couple and their significant others, and the styles of conjugal functioning, they identified seven types of configurations: *siblings*, *intertwined*, *friendship*, *dual*, *concentric*, *communitarian* and *conjugal bridging.* The *siblings' configuration* is composed mainly of close kin, such as parents, parents' in-law, siblings, siblings' in-law, cousins, aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces. They are medium-sized but very dense networks providing for the exchange of small services, financial help and childcare on an inter-generational basis; and emotional support on an intra-generational basis. Conjugality and configuration nearly totally overlap as the couple is characterized by a fusional type of functioning. The *intertwined configuration* is a medium-sized arrangement, composed by a mix of close kin and close friends that merged together over time. The conjugal function is more of the companionship type but it also includes common friends, hence family life also has a fusional nature. The *friendship* configuration focuses on friendship networks built up during adolescence and young adulthood, showing a high level of peer transitivity. Couples support each other by exchanging emotional and material help, providing childcare and sharing leisure activities. Contacts with close family are present but not very frequently.

Again, there is an overlap between couple, children and long-lasting friends, with little space for autonomous relationships. The *dual* configuration differs from the previous ones due to the low fusion and segregation between family life and male friendship circles. These male trajectories are highly gendered-differentiated in the sense that these men perceive themselves as male breadwinners and their wives and the female kinship members as the caregivers. They perform a parallel type of conjugal functioning revealed, among other things, by the non-overlap of their networks. The *concentric* configuration is composed of several individualized groups of close relationships that are tied to the same vertex: the (male) individual. There is a high degree of specialization in the sense that each circle has a focus on intimacy, support and leisure. They display an associative type of conjugal functioning with both members of the couple valuing their relational autonomy. The *communitarian* configuration is composed of alarge pool of kin members. This arrangement is open and it includes relatives, but also friends and neighbours who are considered as family. There is a high degree of overlap and also a multi-functional nature, but contrary to what we may expect, there is a clear notion of individuality. Finally, the *conjugal bridging* is a result of a pathway of divorce and remarriage, whereby close relationships are built in a sequence of conjugal break-ups. This setting is focused on the conjugal bond, be it with the former partners (that turn into close friends) and/or with the new partner and their children. Other relatives are not so important or even absent, meaning a lack of support. Again, this work shows the importance of adopting a multidimensional approach to understand the role of family configurations in individual's everyday life by choosing different analytical dimensions, such as the prevalence of some ties, the type of support provided by the network members, the duration of the relationships and the overlap with the couple network. This study is especially interesting by showing how the conjugal dyad is embedded in a complex web of interactions, and how the couples' interaction style fully shapes the patterns of sociability. The assessment of the degree of overlap between individualized/exclusive relationships and shared/common relationships to both elements of the couple provides a thermometer of the autonomy and cohesion of the network.

Despite the different approaches and analytical strategies, this set of empirical studies share the common purpose of showing the complexity and diversity of personal and family configurations beyond more traditional and institutionalized rules of belonging, as well as their role in everyday life of individuals and families. By highlighting the different composition and dynamics of the networks, the authors uncover the logics underlying the construction of relational proximity and illustrate how people build and maintain their close

relationships and the constraints that fully account for their shape. However, these studies reveal some methodological limitations, which we aim to overcome in the present study. First, with the exception of Widmer's work, the research is based on qualitative data, based on purposive or specific/target small samples, which present problems related to the representativeness and generalization of the results. Regarding Widmer's work on configurations, the author uses a sample composed only of women, which brings a gender bias. Also, by focusing on married women with children, two additional problems stand out: the impossibility of generalizing to other stages of the lifecourse; and of extending them to other family situations (such as childlessness, single persons, divorced persons, etc.) in the same life-stage. The student sample represents the same problem of being related to a specific stage of the lifecourse, the transition to adulthood. Table 2 shows the main characteristics of these empirical studies.

Table 2 Summary of empirical research on the typology of personal networks

Author	Country	Nature	Sample	Concept	Typology
Pahl and Spencer (2004)	U.K.	Qualitative	Young leavers and people with mental health problems in risk of exclusion; N=60	Personal community	Friend-like, Friend-enveloped, Family-like, Family-dependent, Partner-based, Professional-based
Portugal (2006)	Portugal	Qualitative	Men and women, 25 to 34 married with or without children; N=60	Social network	Encapsulated, selective, open, affinity-based
Widmer (2010)	U.S.A.	Quantitative	Students, age between; N=229	Family configuration	Beanpole, friendship, conjugal, post-divorce, siblings, mother-oriented, father-oriented
Widmer (2010)	Switzerland	Quantitative	Women, married, with children aged 6 to 15; N=101	Family configuration	Beanpole, friendship, conjugal, post-divorce, siblings, kinship, sister-oriented, brother-oriented
Aboim, Marinho e Wall (2010)	Portugal	Qualitative	Men in first partnership with dependent children; N=24	Family configuration	Siblings, intertwined, friendship, dual, concentric, communitarian, conjugal bridging

This study benefits from a stratified representative sample of Portuguese women and men born in three cohorts, representing three life-stages and three generations. The sample is large, with 1500 individuals belonging not only to different birth-cohorts, but also to different geographic areas, social profiles and family situations. It is thus extensive and generalizable, covering different segments of society. Moreover, the methodology adopted allows a multidimensional understanding of personal configurations, as it provides data on composition, dynamics and structure.

CHAPTER II - Methodological framework

1. Cross-cohort designs

Cross-cohort designs are important strategies to explore and compare different age groups by taking into account how historical, social and cultural backgrounds intersect with family and biographical time. These designs are adopted to study the impact of historical events and processes on individuals' lives. Thus, this methodological strategy enables us to combine a macro approach, which places the construction of personal networks in wider generational, social and normative contexts, with a micro approach, centered on individuals' life stage, biographical and family circumstances. Therefore, it allow us to observe the diversity of ways of constructing personal networks in each cohort through mechanism of changes occurring in individuals' lives associated to aging, period effects and cohort succession (Alwin and McCammon, 2003).

The cohorts were defined by taking into account the sharing of historical events and societal circumstances by their members, as well as their shared biographic and life-cycle circumstances at the moment of the survey. For Mannheim's and Ortega and Gasset's followers, but also for cohort approaches (Ryder, 1965), young adulthood is a susceptible period of life during which collective attitudes and the identity of a cohort are shaped, as well as the construction of a common worldview, since 'young adults are old enough to participate directly in the movements impelled by change, but not old enough to become committed to an occupation, residence, family of procreation and way of life' (Ryder, 1965: 848). In this sense, we defined these cohorts based on the fact that the individuals belonging to them made the transition to adulthood under different social and economic periods associated with major socio-historic processes in Portugal, which represent distinct stages of social development (Elias, 2001). Those who were born between 1935 and 1940 made the transition to adulthood under the dictatorship regime; those born between 1950 and 1955 made the transition to adulthood in a turbulent time of revolution and change towards the democratic regime; and those who were born between 1970 and 1975 made the transition to adulthood under a consolidated democracy with Portugal belonging to the European Union. At the same time, those cohorts represent distinct stages of the lifecourse: early adults (between 35 and 40 years old), middle-aged adults (between 55 and 60 years old) and older adults (between 70 and 75 years old) (The social and historical contextualization of these cohorts, which support our choice for these age groups will be described in detail in the next chapter).

The studies based on cohorts are crucial to investigate social change, but also to understand the dynamics of aging processes across the lifespan of individuals (Ryder, 1965; Alwin & McCammon, 2004). Notwithstanding, cross-cohort designs carry some limitations in the interpretation of the findings, as the interaction effects between age, cohort and period, also known as the model of "Age-Cohort-Period" triangulation effects, may be hard to disentangle and thus jeopardize the heuristic potential to grasp change at both levels (Blossfeld, 2009).

At the time of the survey, these individuals may have been experiencing distinctive life transitions that represented different demands over various life domains and which required some readjustments in personal relationships and the significance of kin and non-kin within them. They also had different *demographic reservoirs*, in the sense that they had access to distinct types of alters to include in their networks (Puur et al, 2011). For instance, older adults have fewer kinship members from the previous generation than younger ones since for the most part their parents have already died. Cross-cohort designs such as ours allow the comparison of distinct age groups, but they may induce tricky inferences due to the triangulation between ageing (lifestage and kinship reservoir), cohort (historical and social background) and period effects (eg, the context of recession) (Alwin and McCammon, 2003; Blossfeld, 2009), something that we will keep in mind over this dissertation.

Although we recognize that their common experience of major social and historical events could lead us to consider these age-groups as generations, if we follow strictly Mannheim's definition of generation, in the absence of qualitative information we are lacking the shared awareness of belongingness and the "common subjectivity" (Mannheim, 1961), which we are not able to grasp in our survey (see Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2013; Kertzer, 1983; Troll, 1980). As Alwin and McCammon (2003) note, generations and cohorts are concepts often used interchangeably in spite of their different meanings. A distinction should however be made here. Both focus on the location of individuals in a given historical time, but the idea of "a generation" presumes that the shared biographical experiences shaped both the potential life courses of individuals and the ways in which they have constructed specific and relatively similar worldviews (e.g. Corsten 1999). Thus, we frame the age-groups as cohorts defined as "the aggregate of individuals (within some population definition) who experienced the same event within the same interval" (Ryder, 1965).

So, we choose these three birth-cohorts as they represent different *timings* both in historical time and biographical time. Either in a "generational" sense or in a life-stage perspective,

these cohorts present specific profiles, which fully shape the modes of construction of personal relationships. Individuals' biographies are simultaneously defined by the structural and cultural context in which they live, and by the ways in which they are able to shape and act upon the different constraints and opportunities available to them in a given historical context. Therefore, according to the lifecourse perspective, we will take into consideration both macro and micro variables to describe the cohorts' profiles.

2. Social network analysis

As mentioned in the theoretical framework on social network approach, the reticular paradigm requires the adoption of relational methodologies, such as the adoption of a sociometric strategy. Ego-networks, also known as *star-networks*, are commonly used to reconstruct individuals' personal networks, instead of pre-defining the network boundaries (Scott, 2000). Networks are reconstituted based on a privileged informant (ego), who report the connections between him/her and the network members (alters), but also within network members. To elicit the list of network members, the researcher choose a *name generator* (e.g., *with whom do you discuss important matters?*), relying on a free-listing technique to elicit a list of persons (alters) according to the specific research requirement. The cognitive assumptions of these techniques are closely related with the affective dimension of relationships, as people tend to recall those persons to whom they are more emotionally engaged and thus, more readily accessible to memory. Personal networks are most of all, psychological networks (Surra and Milardo, 1991). If on the one hand, ego-centred networks provide a comprehensive approach which comes close to the "ties who matter" to individuals as significant other, as the boundaries are not established à priori by the researcher; on the other hand, as a recall task relying on the unilateral perception of ego regarding other relationships, the reconstitution may be biased by memory issues and processes of information retrieval. Still, this subjectivism is also the richness of this method (Fernand, 1997).

After listing the names, respondents are asked to provide information on the characteristics of the networks members (nodes), but also on the relationships established between them (ties). Thus, the type of information provided by the respondent can be divided in two categories: the *attributes* of the alters and the *sociometric* indicators (MacCarthy, 2002). The attribute-based analysis informs us on the *compositional* dimension of personal networks. We can have

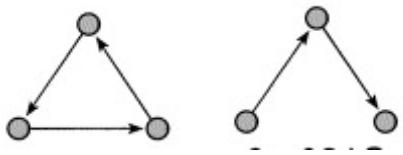
access to this information by asking ego to identify some characteristics of the network members, such as the type of tie, the sex, the level of education, the profession, the place of residence, etc... Complementary to this information, the sociometric indicators offer an effective way of mapping individual's embeddedness in the ensemble of meaningful connections, and thus provide information on the *structure* of the network, in particular the level of connectedness and the role of ego within the whole architecture of relationships. This is particularly relevant to explore the bonding and bridging patterns of social capital (Widmer, 2010)

Based on the graph theory and mathematical algorithms and, through the utilization of specialized software on social network analysis (eg., Ucinet, Ego-net, StatNet, Pajek), we can obtain useful measures on the structural organization of personal networks. Drawing on a matrix of relationships between ego and the network members (alters) and among alters, (corresponding to an "alter per alter" data-base), we may extract different indicators. In this dissertation, we will focus on three main structural indicators: *density*, *transitivity* and *ego's betweenness centrality*.

- *Density* indicates the proportion of active ties that exist in a network out of all possible ties. This measure is computed as the number of existing connections (active dyads) divided by the number of pairs of alters cited by ego, providing a measure of potential connections and informing us about the degree of connectedness inside the configuration. A density of 1.0 means that every alter is connected to every other alter. This is an important indicator of *bonding* social capital.

- *Transitivity* is also a measure of connectedness of the network based on the existence of interconnected triads. Individuals tend to organize and perceive their relationships with others in a transitive way, i.e, people feel uncomfortable when they believe the members of their personal network do not like each other or are not linked to each other in a certain way (Widmer and LaFarga, 2006). Therefore, following the literature on social cognition, individuals avoid dissonance and inconsistency by reporting transitive relationships (Heider, 1958). A triad is transitive when the first alter is connected to the second alter, the second alter is connected to the third alter, and the first alter is connected to the third alter (figure 1). This is a complementary indicator of density to measure *bonding* social capital.

Figure 1 Example of a transitive (a) and an intransitive triad (b)



- *Ego's betweenness centrality* is a measure of ego' control and autonomy. Ego is highly between-central to the extent that it lies on many geodesics pathways (shortest pathways) between alters. Thus, this indicator measures ego's role as intermediary between alters, who are not connected unless through him/her. In this sense, ego act as a bridge between alters, and thus potentially control information. Again, ego's betweenness centrality of 1.0 implies that ego is a bridge to all alters who are not *connected to each other (a pure star-network). Ego' betweenness centrality* is a useful indicator of bridging social capital.

One important instrument which is grounded on these relational and cognitive assumptions, techniques and measures is the "Family Network Method" (Widmer and LaFarga, 2006). This "socio-cognitive" methodology was developed by Widmer in the 90's and has been applied across countries, multiple samples and covering different life-stages, providing a comprehensive study of personal and family networks from the point of view of the individual (Widmer, 2010).

In the Family Network Method, the respondent is asked to provide a list of persons who his/her consider as significant family members. The respondent is told that the term "significant" refers to those individuals who have played an important role in his/her life during the last year. This important role may be either positive or negative, "even if you do not get along with him/her". Two main things should be stressed: first, the term "family" is left undefined as this method privileges the meanings attributed by the individual and not established by the researcher; and second, it assumes that significant relationships are not just build within a context of harmony, respect and love, but important persons can also be persons with whom ego may feel upset and angry from time to time. Based on the list of significant family members, several questions are asked about the characteristics of the network members and about three key dimensions of close relationships: contact, emotional support and conflict. Thus, the respondent no only report their relationships with each alter, but also the relationships among all network members. These relationships may be reciprocal

or unidirectional; thereby ego estimates the connection in both directions. For instance, regarding emotional support, egos are asked the following questions: "From time to time, most people discuss significant matters with other people. Who would give emotional support to X during routine or minor troubles?". After mapping the relationships between ego and alters and among alters, a square matrix is build and imputed in specialized software, which provide several sociometric indictors on the structure of network, such as density, transitivity and ego's betweenness centrality, as we previously explained.

In the next topic, we will describe how this technique was adopted in the "Family Trajectories and Social Networks" survey, which articulates a cross-cohort design with social network analysis' techniques based on the Family Network Method.

3. Survey "Family trajectories and social networks"

3.1. Sample and data-collection

This thesis draws on data from the national survey *Life Trajectories and Social Networks* conducted between 2009 and 2010 in Portugal. The fieldwork was conducted by a market research company, GfK Metris, who were intensively trained to apply this instrument by the project scientific team of ICS. The questionnaire was previously tested through a pilot-study, in order to identify the main difficulties of the interviewers (40 interviewers) during the fieldwork associated to the data-collection strategy (random route) and to the questionnaire application. The fieldwork supervision and monitoring was carried out by elements from the research team and the market research company. The questionnaire length was on average 1h30.

We used a representative stratified sample (according to NUTS2 and habitats distribution, and the number of households needed to reach a response rate of >60%) of Portuguese men and women (N=1500) belonging to three birth cohorts: people born between 1935 and 1940; 1950 and 1955 and 1970 and 1975. The initial sample was composed of 1500 individuals. However, since 13 respondents did not identify any close person, these cases were excluded from the present analysis. Thus, the total sample is 1487. Concerning sample distribution

across cohorts, 36% (536) of the respondents belongs to the cohort born between 1970 and 1975, 34.5% (513) belongs to the cohort of individuals born between 1950 and 1955, and 29.5% belongs to the cohort born between 1935 and 1940 (438).

Data were collected through a paper and pencil interview (PAPI), that is, the interviewer had a printed questionnaire, asked the questions to the respondents, and filled in their answers on the questionnaire. Next, we will describe the instrument (the questionnaire organization), giving a special emphasis on how we collected the information on personal networks.

3.2. Instrument

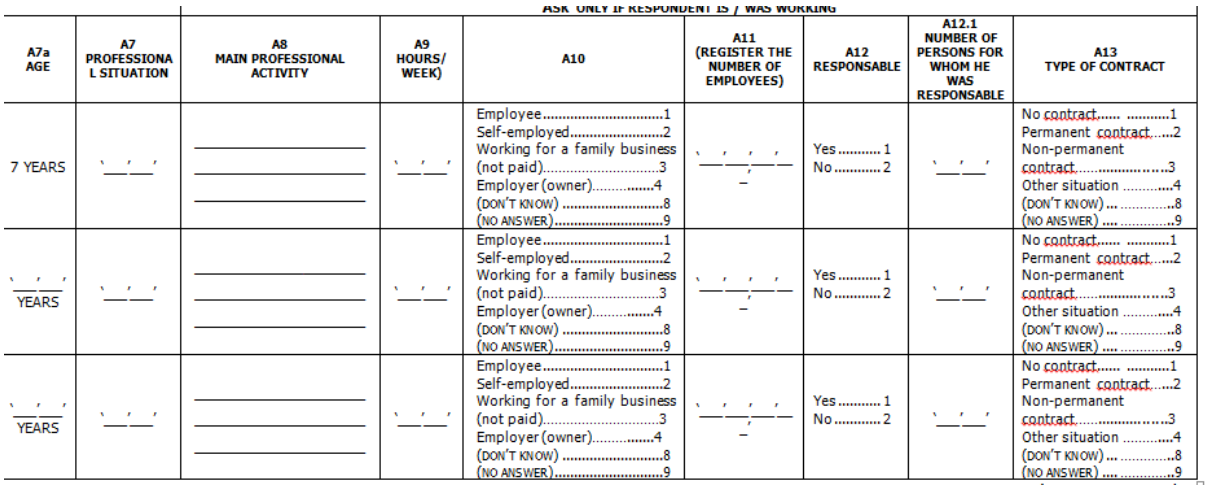
The questionnaire was divided in five main parts: A – life trajectories and life events, B – Life domains of investment and self-esteem assessment; C – Social Networks; D – Attitudes to family life and gender roles; E – Socio-demographical characterization.

We will briefly describe these main blocks, in order to understand how we obtained some of the variables that we will use as shaping factors of personal networks. However, we will mainly focus on the Social Network part, which will be explained in detail and step by step.

3.3. Life trajectories

The first block of questions aimed to map the life trajectories of individuals year by year, since they were born until the present moment, corresponding to the date of the questionnaire application. Seven main types of trajectories were identified though a life-history calendar: the educational, work, household, residential, conjugal, marital, and reproductive (see appendix 1). The following figure illustrates how we mapped the work trajectory (in this case, respondents were asked from the age of 7 years old).

Figure 2 Question on the work trajectory



		ASK ONLY IF RESPONDENT IS / WAS WORKING						
A7a AGE	**A7 PROFESSIONAL SITUATION**	**A8 MAIN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY**	**A9 HOURS/ WEEK)**	**A10**	**A11 (REGISTER THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)**	**A12 RESPONSABLE**	**A12.1 NUMBER OF PERSONS FOR WHOM HE WAS RESPONSABLE**	**A13 TYPE OF CONTRACT**
7 YEARS	' '	_____ _____ _____	' '	Employee.....1 Self-employed.....2 Working for a family business (not paid).....3 Employer (owner).....4 (DON'T KNOW).....8 (NO ANSWER).....9	' ' , ' '	Yes.....1 No.....2	' '	No contract.....1 Permanent contract.....2 Non-permanent contract.....3 Other situation.....4 (DON'T KNOW).....8 (NO ANSWER).....9
' ' YEARS	' '	_____ _____ _____	' '	Employee.....1 Self-employed.....2 Working for a family business (not paid).....3 Employer (owner).....4 (DON'T KNOW).....8 (NO ANSWER).....9	' ' , ' '	Yes.....1 No.....2	' '	No contract.....1 Permanent contract.....2 Non-permanent contract.....3 Other situation.....4 (DON'T KNOW).....8 (NO ANSWER).....9
' ' YEARS	' '	_____ _____ _____	' '	Employee.....1 Self-employed.....2 Working for a family business (not paid).....3 Employer (owner).....4 (DON'T KNOW).....8 (NO ANSWER).....9	' ' , ' '	Yes.....1 No.....2	' '	No contract.....1 Permanent contract.....2 Non-permanent contract.....3 Other situation.....4 (DON'T KNOW).....8 (NO ANSWER).....9

Based on these seven trajectories, we extract the following variables:

- Educational trajectory: the *level of education* completed and the *age of ego* corresponding to the end of the educational career;

- Work trajectory: the *work status*, the *social occupational position* and the *age of ego* at the first paid job;

- Household: the *current household composition* and the *age of ego* when he/her left the parental home;

- Residential trajectory: the *current municipality*, the *number of geographical movements* and whether he/she moved from his/her hometown municipality;

- Conjugal trajectory: the current *conjugality status*, meaning whether ego is currently co-residing with the partner (whether legally married or not) and the *age* of ego at the first conjugal relationships (sharing the same household);

- Marital trajectory: the legal current *marital status*;

- Reproductive trajectory: the *parental status* (having children or not), *number of children alive*, and the *age of ego* at the birth of the first child.

3.4. Investments

In the block B, respondents were asked to identify their level of investment, satisfaction and stress regarding 12 life domains: "professional work", "love and sexual life", "conjugal life", "children", "spending time with friends", "housework," "religion", "family in general", "leisure and free-time activities", "political and civic activities", "education and training", and finally, "finding yourself". In the present research, we will only focus on the level of investment. The level of investment was measured through a 5-position Likert scale ranging from 1- *invested nothing* and 5 – *invested a lot*. The question was asked as follows:

Now, I would like to ask you to please indicate, for each of the following aspects, to what extent you have invested 'a lot', 'quite a bit', 'something', 'a little' or 'nothing' in each one of them during your life (i.e., spending a lot of time, dedicating a lot of effort and energy, sacrificing other activities if necessary).

Figure 3 Life domains' scale of investment

	Invested nothing	Invested a little	Invested something	Invested quite a bit	Invested a lot	(DK/NA)
Professional work	1	2	3	4	5	88
Love life and sexual life	1	2	3	4	5	88
Conjugal life	1	2	3	4	5	88
Children	1	2	3	4	5	88
Spending time with friends	1	2	3	4	5	88
Housework	1	2	3	4	5	88
Religion	1	2	3	4	5	88
Family in general (parents, brothers/sisters…)	1	2	3	4	5	88
Leisure and free-time activities	1	2	3	4	5	88
Political and civic activities (volunteering, participating in associations, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	88
Education and training in general	1	2	3	4	5	88
Finding yourself / taking time for yourself	1	2	3	4	5	88

Based on respondents' answer to this scale, we were able to compute the average level of investment associated to each of these life domains.

3.5. Attitudes to family life and gender roles

The part D included a scale with thirteen questions regarding family values, which were adapted from the European Values Study (1999) and from the International Social Survey Programme, Module Family and Gender Roles (2002). Using a 5-position Likert scale, ranging from 1-stronlgly disagree to 5-strongly agree, the respondent was asked to report his/her level of agreement regarding the 13 items, as well as the position of his/her parents (mother and father) regarding the same topics. In this research we will only analyse the position of ego regarding these items. The question was asked as follows:

For the following group of statements, please indicate to what extent you agree with each one of them. And to what extent do you think that your mother would agree with each one of them? And regarding your father, to what extent do you think he would agree with each one of these statements?

Figure 4 Scale of attitudes to family life and gender roles

	D1 (respondent)						**D2** (mother)						**D3** (father)					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	(DK/NA)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	(DK/NA)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	(DK/NA)
A women is free to choose not have children	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
It's a good idea for a couple who intend to get married to live together first	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
Family is above all, friends and other people are not so important	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
A (pre-school) small child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works (full-time)	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
A man alone can bring up a child just as well as a woman alone	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
When people have children they should get married	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
Homosexual and lesbian couples should have the same rights as other couples, including the right of adoption	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
When children are young it's bad if the couple gets a divorce	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
A person has to have children in order to feel fulfilled	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8	1	2	3	4	5	8
The most important thing for any woman is to have a home and children																		
A couple should do everything together																		

Based on respondents' answer to this scale, we were able to compute the average level of agreement associated to each item.

3.6. Socio-demographic information

The last part of the questionnaire (part E) included several questions on social and demographical information mainly in relation to ego, but also, regarding their parents, siblings and grandchildren.

After reporting whether the respondent's parents were still alive, the questions about ego's father and mother included their marital situation, level of education, main professional occupation, employment status and type of contract. Regarding siblings, the questions were whether they had brothers and sisters, and whether they were still alive. Regarding grandchildren, the question was whether the respondent had grandchildren and in case of a positive answer, they were asked to indicate their year of birth. In relation to socio-demographic information about ego, the questionnaire provided information on respondents' religion, frequency of religious practices, individual and household income and political orientation.

3.7. Social networks

The data on personal networks were collected using a free-listing technique asking individuals to identify their significant others (Mardsen, 1990; Widmer, 2010). We adopted the name generator from the Family Network Method (FNM) (Widmer, 2010), but instead of limiting the relational context to significant family members, we extended to the wider set of close relationships of personal networks. In this sense, respondents were allowed to identify their significant others by listing the names of those persons that during the last year were *important* to them. They were told that by 'important' we meant also 'people who played an important role in your life, even if you did not get along with him/her during the last year'. In sum, resulting from this operationalisation we obtained an ego-centred network of close relationships, which included people who played a positive role but also a negative role over the previous year. This method relies on a cognitive assumption: people hold practical schemes to delineate their set of personal ties, or in other words their significant others (Pahl and Spencer, 2010), in a manner that they can recall through this technique.

Thus, too obtain the networks of close relationships we used an ego-centred technique, which means that the respondent (ego) provided the list of whom he/she considers as important and in a next step, he/she traced the set of relationships between him/her and the network members (alters) and between alters (interactions, emotional support and conflict).

Respondents were asked to list the individuals who were important to them over the year leading up to the time of the application. Individuals were allowed to mention up to 19 alters (1 – ego; 2 to 14 – positive alters; 15 to 20 – negative alters). After listing the ones they consider as important persons, individuals were asked to characterize each person they had listed in terms of their attributes (figure 5). :

- Type of tie: *How are you and that person related?* Based on the following codes (table 3)

Table 3 Coding list for the type of tie which links each alter to ego

Family Members		**Non-family members**
1. Spouses	**19.** Brothers/sisters and Brother-in-law	**35.** Friend
2. Spouse	**20.** Bother/sister of ego	**36.** Acquaintances
3. Boy/girlfriend	**21.** Spouse of brother/sister of ego	**37.** Work/school colleague
4. Ex-spouse	**22.** Bother/sister of spouse of ego	**38.** Boss/chief
5. Ex-boy/girlfriend	**23.** Spouse of brother/sister of spouse of ego	**39.** Friend; boy/girlfriend; colleague of children
Descendants	**24.** Uncles / Aunts	**40.** Neighbour
6. Children	**25.** Uncle/aunt of ego	**41.** Resident domestic employee
7. Stepchildren	**26.** Uncle/aunt of ego	**42.** Non-resident domestic employee
8. Son/daughter-in-law	**27.** Nephews / Nieces	**43.** Others.
9. Grandchildren	**28.** Nephew / niece of ego	
10. Great-grandchildren	**29.** Nephew / niece of spouse	
Ascendants	**30.** Cousins	
11. Mother	**31.** Cousin of ego	
12. Father	**32.** Cousin of spouse	
13. Father-in-law		
14. Mother-in-law	**Spiritual kinship**	
15. Stepfather/Stepmother of ego	**33.** Godmother / Godfather	
16. Stepfather/Stepmother of spouse	**34.** Godson / Goddaughter	
17. Grandmother/grandfather; great-grandmother/great-grandfather of ego		
18. Grandmother/grandfather; great-grandmother/great-grandfather of spouse		

- Sex: *What is the sex of that person?*

- Age: *How old is that person?*

- Acquaintanceship duration: *How old were you when you met that person?*

- Geographical residence: *Where does that person live? (municipality or country)*

- Educational attainment*: And what is the level of education of that person?*

- Frequency of contact face-to-face: *How often do you see that person?*

- Frequency of contact by other means*: And how often do you do you contact with that person in other ways (telephone, internet)?*

- Co-residence over the lifecourse: *Have you ever lived in the same house with this person?*

- Whether they considered each of the close persons "as family"*: Do you consider this person as family?*

Figure 5 Table with the attributes of alters

	C1 NAME	C3a SEX		C4a RELATION	C5a AGE	C6a AGE OF THE INTERVIEWED WHEN HE MET THAT PERSON	C7a MUNICIPALITY OR COUNTRY	C8a LEVEL OF EDUCATION	C9a FREQUENCY OF CONTACT (FACE TO FACE)	C10a FREQUENCY OF CONTACT (OTHER WAYS: TELEPHONE, INTERNET)	C11a LIVED IN THE SAME HOUSE		C12a CONSIDER THIS PERSON HAS FAMILY	
		M	F								YES	NO	YES	NO
1	ME													
2	_____	1	2	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	_____	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	1	2	1	2
3	_____	1	2	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	_____	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	1	2	1	2
4	_____	1	2	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	_____	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	1	2	1	2
5	_____	1	2	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	_____	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	1	2	1	2
6	_____	1	2	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	_____	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	1	2	1	2
7	_____	1	2	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	_____	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	1	2	1	2
8	_____	1	2	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	_____	'__'__'	'__'__'	'__'__'	1	2	1	2

At the end of this block of questions, i.e. after listing the ones they consider as important persons and their attributes, individuals were asked to map the network of relationships among them, in terms of contact, emotional support and conflict. This means that the respondent (ego) reported the relationships between him/her and each network member, as well as the relationships between each alter. The sociometry of the network was map through the following questions (figure 6) :

- Contact: *who contacts to whom regularly?* (the frequency of contact between ego and each alter was already known by the previous question on the frequency of contact, therefore this matrix does not include ego)

- Emotional support: *who would give support to whom in case of need?*

- Conflict: *who regularly as conflicts with whom?*

Figure 6 Matrix of contact, emotional support and conflict

	C1 and C2 NAME	C13 WHO CONTACTS WITH WHOM REGULARLY?																					
1	ME																						
2	_____			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
3	_____		2		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
4	_____		2	3		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
5	_____		2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
6	_____		2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
7	_____		2	3	4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
8	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
9	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
10	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
11	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
12	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
13	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
14	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
15	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		16	17	18	19	20	21	
16	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		17	18	19	20	21	
17	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		18	19	20	21	
18	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		19	20	21	
19	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		20	21	
20	_____		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		21	

	C1 e C2 NAME	C14a SUPPORT TO THE RESPONDENT	C13b WHO WOULD GIVE SUPPORT TO WHOM?																				
1	EU			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
2	_____	2	1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
3	_____	3	1	2		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
4	_____	4	1	2	3		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
5	_____	5	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
6	_____	6	1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
7	_____	7	1	2	3	4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8	_____	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9	_____	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10	_____	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
11	_____	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
12	_____	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
13	_____	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
14	_____	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		15	16	17	18	19	20	21
15	_____	15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		16	17	18	19	20	21
16	_____	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		17	18	19	20	21
17	_____	17	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		18	19	20	21
18	_____	18	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		19	20	21
19	_____	19	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		20	21
20	_____	20	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		21

	C1 NAME	C15a CONFLICTS WITH THE RESPONDENT	C15b WHO REGULARLY HAS CONFLICTS WITH WHOM?																				
1	EU			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
2	_____	2	1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
3	_____	3	1	2		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
4	_____	4	1	2	3		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
5	_____	5	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
6	_____	6	1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
7	_____	7	1	2	3	4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
8	_____	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9	_____	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10	_____	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
11	_____	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
12	_____	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
13	_____	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
14	_____	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		15	16	17	18	19	20	21
15	_____	15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		16	17	18	19	20	21
16	_____	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		17	18	19	20	21
17	_____	17	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		18	19	20	21
18	_____	18	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		19	20	21
19	_____	19	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		20	21
20	_____	20	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		21

A last set of questions were asked regarding the exchange of instrumental support (given and received) only between ego and each alter, and not among all alters. Thus we only have access to the dyadic exchange over the lifecourse.

The instrumental support was divided in three types: *financial or patrimonial support* (lend or give money, inheritance or donation, offering partnership / passing on a business; giving a house or land); *material support in kind* (giving clothes and food, cooked food to take home, help to buy furniture and appliances; taking you into their home for some period of time or lending a house); and *support in services and care* (help with the housework; help in situations of illness, taking care of you; errands, help in small repairs at the house , transport of people). Next, we will illustrate how the question on instrumental support was asked for the case of financial support.

Next, I am going to read a list of different types of support and help that you may have received or given to those persons, throughout your life. For each item, please indicate, first, if you have received that type of support or help from any of the persons you mentioned, and second if have given that that type of support or help to any of them

Did you receive financial or patrimonial support throughout your life from any of the persons mentioned, such as lend or give money; inheritance or donation, offering partnership / passing on a business; giving a house or land, etc.? Did you give financial or patrimonial support throughout your life from any of the persons mentioned, such as lend or give money; inheritance or donation, offering partnership / passing on a business; giving a house or land, etc.?

Figure 7 table on the dyadic exchange of instrumental support

C2	C1 NOME DA PESSOA	FINANCIAL OR PATRIMONIAL SUPPORT		MATERIAL SUPPORT		SERVICES AND CARE SUPPORT	
		C16a	C16b	C17a	C16a	C16b	C17a
		RECEIVED	GAVE	RECEIVED	RECEIVED	GAVE	RECEIVED
16	_____	17	17	17	17	17	17
17	_____	18	18	18	18	18	18
18	_____	19	19	19	19	19	19
19	_____	20	20	20	20	20	20
20	_____	21	21	21	21	21	21

These questions were asked for each alter and for each type of support included in the instrumental support

The types of indicators available to characterize the personal networks are systematized in the following table.

Table 4 Type of network indicators available

Type of network indicators			
Composition (Who?)	**Content (What?)**	**Shape/form (How?)**	
Alters' attributes	***Resources exchanged***	***Dyadic exchange***	***Structural exchange***
Type of tie	Face-to-face contact	Face-to-face contact	Contact?
Sex	Contact by other means	Contact by other means?	Emotional support
Age	Regular contact	Care support and services	Conflict?
Age when ego met alter	Emotional support	Material support in kind	
Municipality	Conflict	Financial support	
Education	Care support and services		
Co-residence at some point of ego's life	Material goods		
Perception as family	Financial support		

In the subsequent chapters, we will explain in detail how we used this information and how we compute each of the compositional and structural indicators of personal networks.

PART 2

CHAPTER I - Changing biographies, norms and social contexts: characterizing the three birth-cohorts

1. Introduction

The studies based on cohorts are crucial to investigate social change, but also to understand the dynamics of aging processes across the lifespan of individuals (Ryder, 1965; Alwin & McCammon, 2004). Notwithstanding, as mentioned in the methodological chapter, cross-cohort designs carry some limitations in the interpretation of the findings, as the interaction effects between age, cohort and period may be hard to disentangle and thus jeopardize the heuristic potential to grasp change at both levels (Blossfeld, 2009).

We draw on the concept of birth-cohort to set the three age-groups. Although we recognize that their common experience of major social and historical events could lead us to consider these age-groups as generations, if we follow strictly Mannheim's definition of generation, in the absence of qualitative information we are lacking the shared awareness of belongingness and the "common subjectivity" (Mannheim, 1961), which we are not able to grasp in our survey (see Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2013; Kertzer, 1983; Troll, 1980). Thus, we frame the age-groups as cohorts defined as "the aggregate of individuals (within some population definition) who experienced the same event within the same interval" (Ryder, 1965).

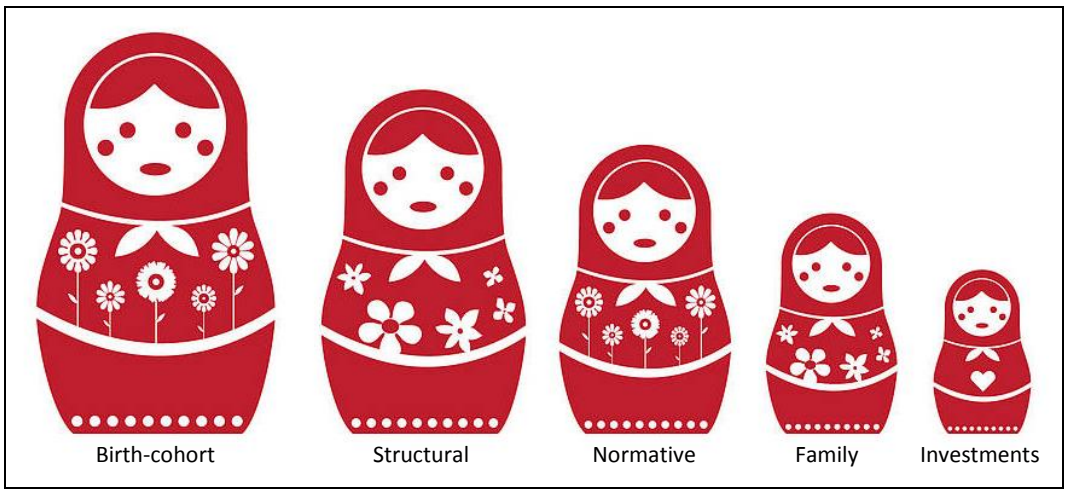
So, we choose these three birth-cohorts as they represent different *timings* both in historical time and biographical time. Either in a "generational" sense or in a life-stage perspective, these cohorts present specific profiles, which fully shape the modes of construction of personal relationships. Thus, the exhaustive characterization of these cohorts is required before going into the compositional and structural analysis of personal networks.

Individuals' biographies are simultaneously defined by the structural and cultural context in which they live, and by the ways in which they are able to shape and act upon the different constraints and opportunities available to them in a given historical context. Therefore, according to the lifecourse perspective, we will take into consideration both macro and micro variables to describe the cohorts' profiles.

In line with this assumption, this chapter corresponds to the characterization of the three birth-cohorts drawing on different dimensions of analysis, ranging from the macro level of society to the micro level of the individual.

This multidimensional characterization is not only important to depict the birth-cohorts, but also to provide a better understanding of the role of these variables as shaping factors of personal networks in the subsequent empirical chapters; as some of these factors have been studied in the literature as having impact on social networks (in general), on family configurations, or on friendship relationships. Moreover, the next empirical studies (chapters II, III, IV) will consider birth-cohort as the main structuring factor; hence we have to be aware of the associations between these factors and their contribution to the whole effect of cohort. Metaphorically speaking, the relationship between cohorts and the other shaping factors can be seen as Russian dolls, with birth-cohort being the biggest one, which progressively incorporates the subsequent ones (figure 8).

Figure 8 Schematic model of the relationships between all shaping factors



With the exception of the social and historical contextualization (point 2.1), the characterization is *data-driven*, in the sense that we draw on the characteristics of the respondents. Thus, we will provide a picture of the birth-cohorts based on:

- the *social and historical pathways* undergone by Portuguese society, which frame the transformations in family life and constitute the background of socialisation of the birth-cohorts as generations – this brief contextualization is *theory-driven*, in the sense that it is not based on the sample, but on secondary empirical data, demographical evidence, and critical

reflections on the contours of family change in Portugal. After this background contextualization we are able to set and characterize the cohorts;

- the *structural conditions* of personal life by comparing the distribution of gender, educational level, social class, work status and regional profiles of the respondents in the three-cohort sample;

- the *normative landscape* of these cohorts by identifying the dimensions which structure the family values of the respondents belonging to the three cohorts – based on the assessment of their *attitudes* towards family life and gender roles;

- the *profiles of transition* into adulthood, by providing an integrated reading of the *timing* of transitions based on the calendars (mean age) of the following social markers: leaving school, entry into the labour market, leaving parental home; entry into conjugality; and entry into parenthood.

- the current *family and biographical circumstances*, by locating the respondents according to some proxy coordinates of their family practices, such as: work status, marital status, partnership-status, parental-status, geographical mobility and household composition;

- And finally, the *life domains of self-investment* or life-foci over the lifecourse, such as work, children, leisure, education, among others; based on their retrospective and subjective assessment.

2. A multidimensional reading of the three cohorts

2.1. Social and historical background of family change in Portugal

This study proposes to undertake an extensive analysis of individuals' personal configurations from the perspective of a society which, albeit strongly familialistic, has also undergone processes of social change in families over the last three decades, encompassing the modernisation trends experienced by other western societies.

According to Wall (2011), two periods have marked the transformations that have occurred in Portuguese society during the last century, which fully impacted private life: first, a movement of *renewed familialism* during the 1960s, which emphasised the conjugalisation of family life, and was characterised by the segregation of gender roles and the dominance of the male breadwinner model; and second, a movement of *modernisation*, accentuated since the 1960s and consolidated after the revolution of 1974, towards more equal gender roles, new educational values, access to contraception, valorisation of the individual, and a decline of the subordination of young couples to their parents (Almeida et al., 1998; Wall, 2011).

Before the transition to democracy in 1974 and during almost fifty years of right-wing dictatorship, the male breadwinner model, Catholic marriage, high birth rates, no divorce (for those married in the Catholic Church) and strong gender inequalities, both in private and public spheres, were the core defining characteristics of family life. In the absence of a welfare state supporting families and the care of dependent persons, family obligations were strong not only within the nuclear family but also across the generations and with regard to distant kin such as aunts and uncles. However, as in other European societies, the nuclear family household was the predominant form, even in traditional rural society, with complex family households representing only one in eight households (Almeida et al., 1998; Laslett, 1972).

In contrast to this model of "unsupported familialism" (Leitner, 2003), the last three decades have seen rapid change. Developments in family policies following the 1974 Revolution led to the recognition of family diversity, new obligations on the part of the State to support families, and strong linkages between family and gender equality policies. The "dual earner" model and the promotion of work-family balance for both mothers and fathers have been high on the policy agenda. As a result, past and present pathways have blended in a specific way and made for some differences as well as commonalities with other Southern European countries (Wall and Escobedo, 2009). In common, Portugal may be described as a country with an explicit ideological commitment to the family; as some theorist have stress the vitality of a strong solidarity within the so-called welfare-society, while also stressing that despite intergenerational obligations remain strong, social inequality is also reproduced through informal support through mechanisms of gender and social class differentiation (Portugal, 2014; Santos, 1994, 2000; Wall et al., 2001). However, in contrast to other Southern European countries, Portugal has moved rapidly towards a dual earner family model and a

welfare state which, albeit limited in its budget, has fostered support for dual earning through the building up of leaves and publicly-subsidized institutions (Torres et al., 2009; Wall, 2011). Rather than defamilialisation, however, this has made for a mixed welfare model in which the state, the market and families are seen as complementary. Others have been stressing the existence of a strong welfare-society whereby individuals fulfil their needs and compensate for the fragilities of welfare-state (Santos, 2000).

This specific double-bind in culture and policy, underlining the importance of family commitments as well as new trends in families and family policies, makes Portuguese society an interesting case study. The ambivalent or dual behaviour of Portuguese society allows us to gain some new insights into the impact of late modern trends, such as growing individualisation and pluralisation, on individuals' significant family ties, in a country with a historically strong and evolving family culture.

At the level of family transitions and practices, these developments have led to growing trend of pluralisation and individualisation, in particular since the nineties (Wall, 2005; Aboim, 2006). Statistical indicators of family practices revealed decreasing fertility rates, a delayed transition to marriage, an increase in divorce rates and of births out of wedlock, a drop in the size of domestic households, an increase in the number of people living alone and of couples without children, and the increasing presence of women in education and in the labour market (Almeida et al., 1998; Guerreiro et al, 2009). For instance, divorce levels are today above average in the EU, cohabitation and post-divorce families have increased steadily, female activity rates (women aged 15 to 64) stood at 70% in 2010, placing Portugal just behind Scandinavian countries in terms of the percentage of women who are employed full-time.

Recent data drawn from the national census 2011 revealed three major demographic trends. First, a decrease in the size of household units, with the conjugal dyad assuming a predominant role in family organization, in particular couples without children. Secondly, the drop of complex family households, as a reflection of the growing autonomy of couples and individuals in relation to their families of origin. Finally, there is an increasing salience of (young and old) single-person households and lone-parent arrangements (Delgado & Wall, 2014). However, behind these indicators may lie different levels of incorporation of change, as another important feature of Portuguese society is that, despite the democratisation of education and the increasing qualification of manpower, social inequalities continue to

strongly shape values and practices and Portuguese society, has indeed remained highly stratified.

The modernisation of a society also operates through the transformation at the representational level which underlies individuals' values, beliefs and attitudes. This ambivalent trace which portrays family practices in Portugal also characterizes social change in the domain of family values and gender roles. The studies on changes in family representations over the last two decades have highlighted this double-bind behavior of continuity and change in Portuguese society: individuals hold traditional positions regarding some spheres of family life, such as primary role of family and the importance of children, while also revealing more modern attitudes in relation to other dimensions, such as the differentiation of gender roles and the deinstitutionalization of marriage through divorce and informal cohabitation. If on one hand, a lay vision of marriage and the devaluation of religious marriage prevail alongside the valorisation of the intrinsic aspects of intimate relationships and the belief in more equal gender roles; on the other hand, values placed on openness towards alternative family forms and the centrality of children still keep a fairly traditional frame.

Drawing on data from the *International Social Survey Programme*, Aboim (2010) studied the attitudinal profile of Portuguese society regarding family life and gender roles, situating the national landscape in the European context. The author emphasizes this duality in attitudes as Portuguese respondents revealed a modern position in relation to certain domains, such as marriage, divorce, cohabitation and the conjugal division of labour; while also revealing a more traditional position regarding the place of children in personal identity, family organization, and parenthood-related issues. In comparison with other European countries, the Portuguese were more similar to the Spanish and the Finnish as they share the same values' profile, designated by *moderate familialism*, since it combines a certain degree of familialism alongside an egalitarian vision of the conjugal division of labour (Aboim, 2010). Actually, we see how this value orientation functions as a regulator of personal and family practices. For instance, this dimension of familialism was also found in the structuring of care arrangements in later life, as elderly people rely on a "family primacy" guideline to claim their preferences towards close relatives as care providers (São José, 2011); as well as in the norms, which regulate the exchanges of support within social networks of married women with children (Portugal, 2014). Cunha (2007) also stressed the centrality of children in the organization of family and personal life in Portuguese society.

The location of individuals within social space as well as their own life trajectories plays a decisive role in the incorporation and internalisation of values. Empirical evidence has been showing that change is stronger among young people, those with higher levels of education living within the metropolitan area of Lisbon and other densely populated areas, and those who hold skilled professional occupations; are more open to value changes concerning marriage and conjugality (Almeida, 2003; Lesthaeghe, 2010). However, an in-depth analysis of attitudes and practices within several European countries and their variations along sex, professional activity, education and religion, showed the persistence of gender and social inequality in the incorporation of new trends (Aboim, 2010). Thus, rather than pointing to a single and major catalytic factor which determines the modernisation of societies, Aboim talks instead of a complexity of European modernities.

The previous social and historical contextualization of social change in family and personal life in Portuguese society clarifies the option of building this three-cohort design, as these cohorts accompanied the described trends. As we mentioned, we consider the mutual intersection of personal and family time with historical and generational time in the active construction of individuals' biographies. Thus, following this key-principle of the lifecourse perspective, we choose these birth-cohorts as they reflect different historical and social moments, which fully shaped the transitions to adulthood of individuals belonging to these age-groups, and constituted their context of socialization. Very briefly:

The birth-cohort of 1935-1940 represents the generation born before World War II and raised in the heyday of Salazar's right-wing authoritarian and colonialist regime of the *Estado Novo* (1926-1974). They were 70 to 75 years old at the time of the survey (old age).

The birth-cohort of 1950-1955 represents the postwar generation, which entered adult life in the late 1960s, during the final period of the authoritarian regime. This middle generation lived through the troubled times of the transition to democracy, also undergoing the impact of the major changes that occurred in economic, social, political and cultural structures. They were 55 to 60 years old at the time of the survey (middle age).

The birth-cohort of 1970-1975 represents an age group that entered adult life in the post-EU-accession period and democratic regime. The beginning of the 1990s was a time of stabilization and consolidation in terms of the massive social changes that had shaken

Portuguese society in earlier decades. They were 35 to 40 years old at the time of the survey (young age).

After this brief historical and social background, we are now able to focus on the sample and hence to characterize the three birth-cohorts by drawing on the available indicators. We decided to avoid an *a prioristic* characterization of the cohorts in a life-stage sense as the life transitions usually included as typical of the different life-stages are often highly normative (eg., family life-cycle model, Aldous, 1996). Thus, we decided to portray their current family and biographical status based on the sample.

2.2. Structural conditions: sex, education, social class, geographic area

To characterize the three birth-cohorts in terms of their location in the social structure concerning gender, education, social class and geographic locations, we used classificatory typologies which were already validated in previous empirical studies.

Concerning ***education***, we chose the ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) developed by UNESCO, given its already proven potential to grasp the impact of education on social life and enabling international comparison. However, due to the inadequacy of some categories with regard to the national educational system, we re-arranged some of the categories. We ended up with 5 categories: "none", "primary school" (4^{th} grade or less), "lower secondary school" (ranging from 5^{th} and 9^{th} grade of the basic level), "upper secondary school" (ranging from 10^{th} and 12^{th}), and "higher education" (bachelor, degree, master, PhD). Given that our sample includes individuals who never attended school, we added the category "none".

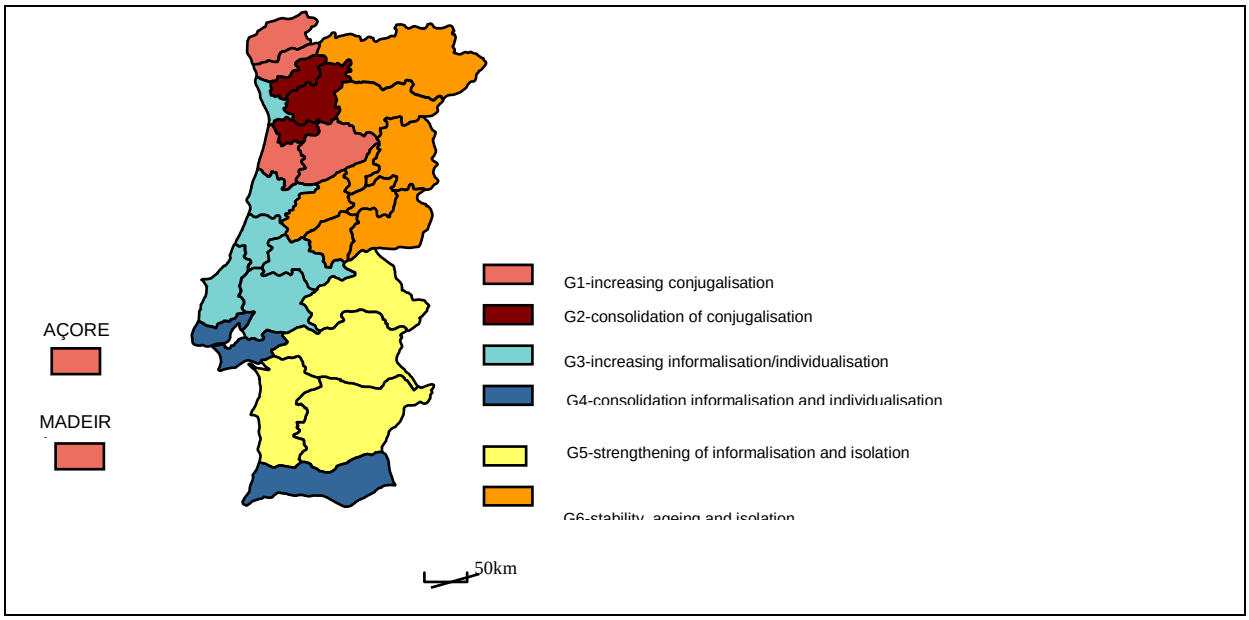
For the categorization of ***social class***, we used the ACM class typology, which was validated both at the national and international level (Almeida, Costa and Machado, 1998; Costa, 1999). This typology results from the combination of occupation and employment status. The original typology has 7 categories, but given some residual percentages within the categories of "farmers" and "agricultural workers", following the indications of the authors, we reduced

it to five categories: entrepreneurs and executives (EE), professionals and technicians[1] (PT), self-employed (also includes farmers) (SE), routine employees (RE), and industrial workers (also includes agricultural workers) (IW). For those out of work or in unpaid work, we decided to attribute the partner's social class; and for those who are retired and unemployed, the position associated to the last job.

Regarding the categorization of ***geographical area of residence***, we lack enough detail to define the areas of residence in terms of level of urbanization, as the minimal territorial unit available is the municipality, which is quite heterogeneous and thus may include both rural and urban districts/counties. Actually, by the end of the 90's, the dual categorizations which traditionally opposed coastal/interior and North/South became insufficient to capture the heterogeneity and socio-spatial complexity of the country (Carmo, 2008). Despite the heuristic potential of these binary logics to grasp representations, values and identities, these oppositions are not enough to tackle some foci of urbanization and economic growth inside the national landscape (Ferrão, 1996; 2002). Therefore, we chose an alternative typology of regional profiles of family change developed by Wall and Aboim (2003), which combines the classification of the national territorial divisions (NUTS III) and the evolution of some indicators between 1991 and 2001 regarding certain family and social demographic indicators collected through census data.

[1] This category is labelled as "Professionals and managers" in its original formulation. We decided to replace the term "manager" by "technician", as "manager" may be confused with "executive and entrepreneur" occupation

Figure 9 Regional demographical profiles



The authors built this typology through a cluster analysis based on the evolution of the following types of statistical indicators: household structure and size; the rate of cohabitation outside marriage; the proportion of lone-parent families; the proportion of stepfamilies; the percentage of people living alone between 20 and 29 years of age and above 65 years of age (see Wall & Aboim, 2003). They reached a six-fold typology of regional demographic profiles: G1 – increase in conjugalisation; G2 – consolidation of conjugalisation; G3 – increase in informalisation and individualisation; G4 – reinforcement of informalisation and individualisation; G5 – strengthening of isolation and informalisation; and G6 – stability, isolation and population ageing. For our analysis, we merged the profiles G1 and G2 due to the residual percentages. The national territorial units belonging to each profile are illustrated in figure 9.

Table 5 shows the distribution of the structural factors by cohort. Note that the percentages should be read in vertical line.

Table 5 Distribution of structural variables by cohort (N=1487)

		1935-40 (%)	1950-55 (%)	1970-75 (%)	χ^2
Sex	Female	58.9	59.1	61.6	0.95 n.s.

	Male	41.1	40.9	38.4	
Education	None	17.4	0.6	0.6	659.33**
	Primary school	64.9	60.6	9.4	
	Lower secondary school	11.5	20.1	41.5	
	Upper secondary school	2.1	10.9	23.9	
	Higher education	4.1	7.8	24.6	
Work status	Working	13.0	58.3	81.5	737.30**
	Unpaid work	13.5	11.1	3.2	
	Retired	69.9	17.7	0.4	
	Out of labour market	3.7	12.9	14.9	
Social class	Executives and entrepreneurs	8.1	7.5	8.4	144.44**
	Professionals and technicians	8.6	9.8	22.3	
	Routine employees	26.7	35.6	34.6	
	Agricultural workers	6.0	1.8	1.5	
	Industrial workers	26.9	30.8	27.9	
	Independent workers	13.2	10.8	4.3	
	Farmers	10.4	3.7	0.9	
Geographic area	Conjugalisation	21.5	30	31.5	37.81**
	Increasing individualisation	36.1	32.6	32.1	
	Reinforcement of individualisation	23.5	23.2	27.8	
	Isolation and informalisation	8.4	8.2	5.2	
	Stability, isolation, population ageing	10.5	6.0	3.4	

All structural variables considered are significantly associated with cohorts, with the exception of sex. The gender distribution was controlled by the sampling strategy as the construction of a representative sample requires the replication of the distribution of men and women in Portugal in each cohort.

The analysis of ***education*** across cohorts reveals the massive effects of the increasing access to basic schooling over the last decades, especially after the Revolution. The decrease in the percentage of illiterates from the oldest to the youngest cohort is striking, from almost 18% to less than 1% in the middle and younger cohort. Primary school is the modal category of educational attainment in the older and middle cohort, around 60 to 65%, while in the younger cohort, the percentage of individuals in this situation is around 9%. All the other advanced levels of education are higher in the younger cohort, with 48.5% having at least completed the upper secondary school. Still, the lower secondary or basic level is the modal category in the younger cohort with 41.5%, corresponding to compulsory education.

The dynamics of ***class structure*** in Portugal has been marked by a decrease in the number of individuals working in the agricultural sector and the increased of skilled occupations. In our sample we witness the same trend over the cohorts. In the oldest cohort, 16.4 per cent of individuals were working in the agricultural sector (farmers and workers), whereas in the middle and younger cohort the values drop to 5.6% and 2.4%, respectively. The increase in professionals and technicians is also visible, as in the older cohort, professional workers represent 9% of the cases, while in the youngest cohort they represent 22.3 per cent of the cases. The salience of routine employees and industrial workers is quite stable over the cohorts, with a slight increase of the former (26.7% in the oldest cohort and around 35% in the other two).

If we look at the location of individuals in the ***spatial structure***, we can see that there is a correspondence between the demographical changing trends between 1991 and 2001 and the differences across cohorts. We find a decrease in the number of people living both in areas of stability/isolation/ageing-population and areas of isolation/informalisation (interior). We see that 10.5% of individuals from the oldest cohort are living in stability/isolation/ageing-population areas, whereas only 3.4% of individuals belonging to the younger cohort are living in the same areas. Likewise, 8.4% of individuals from the oldest cohort are living in isolation/informalisation areas, whereas only 5.2% of individuals belonging to the younger cohort are living in these regions. Interestingly, these focus correspond to the regions of the interior. This movement seems to be compensated by an increase of individuals from the youngest cohort living in individualisation and conjugalisation areas, where family diversity is higher.

The differential distribution of key-variables measuring social structures across cohorts mirrors some major changes that have been operating in the last decades in Portuguese society affecting the educational sphere, the processes of social recomposition and growing regional particularities in demographical terms. The consequences of a massive increase in access to education since the 1970s and 80s and the impact of longer school careers are visible through the increase in educational levels as well as of skilled occupations in the youngest cohort, in particular of Professionals and Technicians. Social change also shows up in other broader processes, such as urbanisation and industrialisation undergone mainly since the 1960s. The consequences of rural exodus are in line with the decline of farmers and agricultural workers in the middle and younger cohorts and the emptying of the interior. In opposition to the oldest cohort, the middle and especially the youngest cohort is characterised by individuals living in

urban centres with higher rates of new family living arrangements, such as stepfamilies, cohabitating couples and people living alone; while older adults are in the interior areas.

2.3. Normative background: attitudes towards family life and gender roles

As argued in topic 2.1, Portuguese society has been witnessing considerable transformations on family representations and practices, even if they are not experienced with the same intensity and at the same pace across the two levels and over the distinct social segments of society. The expression of these changes has not been homogeneously translated into the private sphere; instead, it varies across the different domains of personal and family life (conjugality, gender division of work, family organization, etc…), the demographical profiles of the geographical area of residence and individuals' social position (Almeida, 2003). This is extremely important as we just described how the three cohorts are highly differentiated in terms of their structural contexts.

Social representations, as ideas which are collectively shared in a society, also designated as hegemonic representations (Moscovici, 1961), are appropriated by individuals within their social contexts, whereby values and practices are confirmed or contested in the private settings. People must cope with innovation, converting the unfamiliar into familiar through a permanent work of *bricolage* between old and new ideas (Moscovici, 1961). Transposing this to the family domain, new family forms (same sex families, technologically assisted reproduction, reconstituted families, and lone fatherhood), gender division of work and care, and the place of children in personal and family identities, are appropriated by individuals and accommodated in old ideas and practices and reconfigured with new discourses and meanings, according to their socially differentiated locations.

Given the importance of individuals' social contexts in the appropriation of values in their private life, birth-cohort assumes a major role as a structuring factor of family attitudes. As generational time, cohorts operate as organizing principles of the construction of worldviews and identities. Therefore, birth-cohort understood as generation will be considered as a gateway to have access to different social times, in the sense that they reflect a shared and collective framework as a result of a common background of socialization. Also the configurations of gender regimes and social class structures are differentially constructed

within generations, whereby the comparison between cohorts should be contextualized in interaction with gender and social class.

So, three reasons justify the importance of analyzing the differences and commonalities in the attitudes of the three birth cohorts: the construction of different representations in the frame of each age group, which may reinforce their consistence as generations; the recursive relationship between values and practices, in the sense that attitudes shape networks and networks shape values; and the importance of taking into account gender and social class. The following table shows the dimensions of family values and gender roles and the respective items.

Table 6 Dimensions and correspondent items on attitudes to family life and gender roles

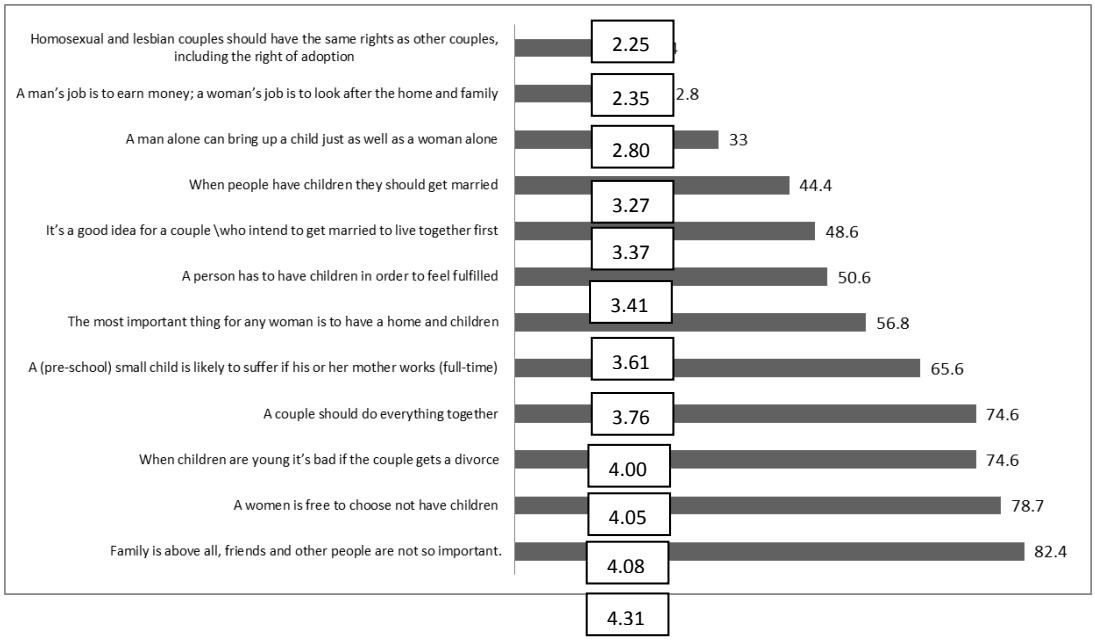
Dimension	Item
Parenthood and conjugality	When people have children they should get married
Women and domestic life	The most important thing for any woman is to have a home and children
Parenthood and identity	A person has to have children in order to feel fulfilled
Cohabitation and informalisation	It's a good idea for a couple \who intend to get married to live together first
Homosexual family rights	Homosexual and lesbian couples should have the same rights as other couples, including the right of adoption
Male lone-parenthood	A man alone can bring up a child just as well as a woman alone
Family primacy	Family is above all, friends and other people are not so important.
Parenthood and divorce	When children are young it's bad if the couple gets a divorce
Women and maternity	A women is free to choose not have children
Conjugal division of labour	A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family
Female work and maternity	A (pre-school) small child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works (full-time)
Fusional conjugal style	A couple should do everything together

We will analyze individuals' attitudes in relation to some topics of family life and gender roles, such as same-sex marriage and the right to adoption, gender differentiation of paid and unpaid work, the place of children in the organization of conjugality and in the construction of individuals' identity, and the centrality of family in individuals' life (table 6). Since representations are constructed within the frame of generational time, gender relations, and movements of social recomposition, we will adopt a comparative perspective between men and women and across social class in the three birth-cohorts.

2.3.1. Spaces of agreement and disagreement

A first look at the attitudinal landscape reveals some spaces of agreement and spaces of disagreement in the total sample (figure 10). It is important to highlight that the original formulation of the items was maintained and the scale ranged from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. The following graph shows the percentage of respondents in the total sample who "agree" and "fully agree" with each item and the average score (M) in each item, as well.

Figure 10 Percentage of respondents who "agree" and "fully aggre" with each item and the mean score of each item



Looking at the first three bars, we can observe the items which present low levels of agreement. The belief in the equality of homosexual and heterosexual couples regarding family life is the dimension which shows less favorable positions, with an average score of M=2.25 and a percentage of agreement around 20%. At the same time, the second statement regarding which respondents showed a low level of agreement is the item on the traditional conjugal division of labour, with an average score of M=2.35 and a percentage of agreement around 23%. Finally, the third item where the level of agreement is quite low is the item on the competence of a lone father to bring up a child as well as a lone mother, with an average of M=2.80 and a percentage of 33% of agreement. Interestingly, just by looking at these three

indicators, we can see the dual pattern that we mentioned in the introduction to modern and traditional trends in Portuguese society, expressed by a disapproval of fathers as primary caregivers and homosexual family rights and simultaneously, the rejection of the male breadwinner model in the couple. If we look at the items which attained a higher level of agreement, we find the preference for a fusional conjugal style, the idea of discarding or postponing divorce for the sake of young children, the right of women to refuse maternity, and the notion of family primacy. Again, if, on one hand, the respondents are favorable to the right of women to choose not to have children (M=4.08; 78.7%), which is quite a "modern" idea of female voluntary childlessness; on the other hand, they reveal quite favorable position to more traditional ideas of family cohesion, through a high level of agreement with the preference for a couple's fusional style (M=4.00; 74.6%), with the avoidance or postponement of divorce for the sake of children (M=4.05; 74.6%); and the idea that family is hierarchically above all other relationships (M=4.31; 82.4%).

We carried out comparison tests for all items and we found that the cohorts are different concerning the position towards each item, with a decrease over cohorts in relation to more traditional items, and, in contrast, an increase in the level of acceptance to change. Gender effects are not so sharp, with men and women differing only with regard to "women and domestic life", "female work and maternity" and "conjugal division of labour". Men are more favorable to a gendered conjugal division of labour than women; whereas women are more conservative regarding maternity, namely, female work and childlessness. Actually, there are two interaction effects between cohort and gender associated with the dimensions of "women and maternity" and "parenthood and divorce". Regarding the first item, women from the oldest cohort are less in agreement with the right of women to refuse maternity than men; this trend reverses in the middle and younger cohort, with women being more favorable than men to the rejection of the motherhood by women. Regarding "parenthood and divorce", women from the older and middle cohorts are more favorable to the idea that a couple should not get divorce when there are young children when compared to men from the same cohort; whereas, this trends reverses in the younger cohort, with men being the ones who agree more with this statement.

Given the high number of items, our option was to carry out a cohesive reading of the cohorts' differences, instead of an item by item analysis.

2.3.2. The structuring dimensions of family values: analyzing the attitudinal indexes

In order to gain a systematic and integrated reading of the position of Portuguese respondents regarding certain domains of family life and then, being able to cross-tab the attitudes with some key-variables (sex and social class), we decided to create composite indexes, based on the internal organizational of the attitudinal scale. Therefore, we carried out a factor analysis using the principal components' method of extraction, which resulted in a three-component structure which explains 64% of variance (table 7). All the items with commonalities below 0.5 were excluded from the analysis, namely the items referring to: "women and maternity"; conjugal division of labour"; "female employment and maternity"; and "fusional conjugal style". We retained the factors with *eigenvalue* score higher than 1. The component matrix will be presented in the following table, showing the coefficients (*loadings)* of each item in the components.

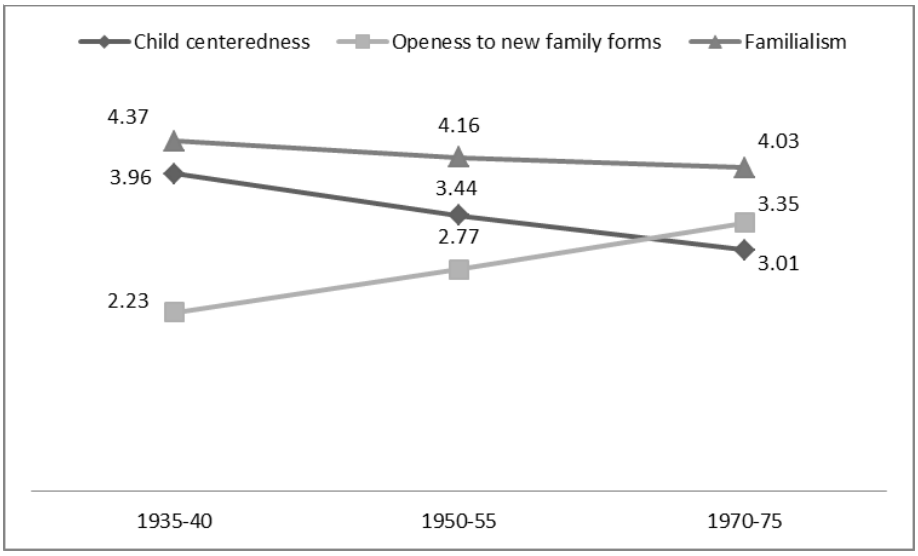
Table 7 Attitudinal indexes: Item's loadings in each component

	Child centeredness	Openness to new family forms	Familialism
When people have children they should get married	.649		
The most important thing for any woman is to have a home and children	.867		
A person has to have children in order to feel fulfilled	.883		
It's a good idea for a couple who intend to get married to live together first		.602	
Homosexual and lesbian couples should have the same rights as other couples, including the right of adoption		.810	
A man alone can bring up a child just as well as a woman alone		.719	
Family is above all, friends and other people are not so important.			.884
When children are young it's bad if the couple gets a divorce			.632
Variance explained (%)	36.80	13.96	13.41
Eigenvalue	2.94	1.12	1.07

The first component is *child centeredness* and represents the centrality of children for personal identity and family organization (36.80% of variance explained). The second component is *openness to new family forms* as it is associated with the underscoring of

informal cohabitation, same-sex couples' full rights and the lone fathers' competence in childcare (13.96% of variance explained). Finally, we have *familialism* which underlines the principle of family primacy and the cohesion of family for children's sake (13.41% of variance explained). Based on this structure of three main components, we constructed three attitudinal indexes by computing the mean of the scores in the items which compose each component (scores also ranging from 1 to 5).

Figure 11 Average means of attitudinal indexes by cohort (N=1487)



All cohorts differ in their attitudes towards family life, since the comparison analysis through a *one-way ANOVA* reveals that they are all different regarding the three attitudinal indexes. *Familialism,* in the sense of family primacy, assumes a major role as structuring family values across the three cohorts, being the attitudinal index which reaches the highest level of agreement (M_{total}=4.18). However, there is a tendency of decreasing importance from the oldest to the youngest cohort, as all the cohorts' average scores differ ($F_{(1481,2)=}$24.77; ρ<.000).

The second attitudinal index which also shares a quite high level of favourable consensus is *child centeredness,* as the mean age in the total sample is 3.44. Again, the oldest cohort is the one who is more child-centered (M=3.96), followed by the middle one (M=3.44), and finally, the younger cohort with an average score of 3.01, almost 1 point less approving than the oldest one ($F_{(1481,2)=}$127.21; ρ<.000).

The index on *openness to new family forms* shows the lowest level of agreement in all cohorts (M_{total}=2.82). This is the dimension regarding which all respondents seem more resistant.

However, unlike the trends associated with the previous indexes, there is an increasing trend of agreement over cohorts ($F_{(1481,2)=}$204.23; ρ<.000). Although they are all unlike, there is a striking difference between the oldest and the youngest cohort, as the oldest shows an average score of 2.23, and the youngest one shows an average score of 3.35.

In sum, there is a decrease of family-centeredness and child-centeredness over the three cohorts; while there is an increasing trend of acceptance of new family forms over the cohorts. All these contrasts, especially between the oldest and the youngest cohorts, seems to reflect that social trends have a differential expression at the level of values in the frame of cohorts, reflecting distinct levels of incorporation of change and thus revealing a complex structure of family values in the national landscape.

Given that social class and gender are also important coordinates for the study of values in the frame of cohorts, we tested the interaction effect between cohort and social class and cohort and sex, but we found no interactional effects in both cases. However, we found a main effect of social class in the three attitudinal indexes for the total sample, but not of gender. Regarding both familialism and child-centeredness, the results point to the same trend: self-employed workers and industrial and agricultural workers present the higher scores; whereas professionals and technicians, executives and entrepreneurs and finally, routine employees present lower scores, being less family and children centred ($F_{familialism}$ (1466, 4) =6.00 and $F_{child\text{-}centeredness}$ (1466, 4) =13.54; ρ<.000). Regarding openness to new family forms, we find the inverse trend, with professionals and technicians, executives and entrepreneurs and finally, routine employees being more open to new family forms; and industrial and agriculture workers and independent workers being more resistant (F (1466, 4) =21.14; ρ<.000). These results are convergent with previous empirical work on the role of structural context on the values' orientations of individuals in Portugal, but also in the European context, pointing to an orientation of PTE and EE towards openness to change and the orientation of IW and SE towards conservation.

In order to understand the contribution of these three variables – cohort, gender, and social class - on the three attitudinal indexes, we ran a set of linear regression models (table 8). The model is organized by block, as each variable entered sequentially.

Table 8 Linear regression model on attitudinal indexes (standardized coefficients)

		Child-centerdeness	Openness to new family forms	Family primacy
1935-40	1950-55	-0,53***	0,54***	-0,20***
	1970-75	-0,96***	1,13***	-0,33***
1935-40	1950-55	-0,53***	0,54***	-0,20***
	1970-75	-0,96***	1,13***	-0,33***
Women	Men	-0,05	0,08	0,05
1935-40	1950-55	-0,51***	0,52***	-0,19***
	1970-75	-0,91***	1,06***	-0,30***
Women	Men	-0,07	0,09	0,03
Industrial workers	Self-employed	-0,01	-0,16**	-0,03
	Entrepreneurs/executives	-0,24**	0,21**	-0,12
	Routine employees	-0,20***	0,10	-0,14***
	Professional/technicians	-0,28	0,25***	-0,17**

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

The three models confirm the previous findings on the significant impact of cohort and social class, as well as the absence of a significant effect of gender on any of the attitudinal indexes considered. Regarding cohort, we see that individuals belonging to the younger and middle cohorts show a lower level of *familialism* and *child-centeredness* compared with individuals born in the oldest cohort, and the inverse trend regarding the openness to new family forms. The introduction of the sex of individuals has no impact across the three attitudinal indexes. Finally, the inclusion of social-professional occupations has a differential significant impact on each index. Regarding *child-centeredness*, entrepreneurs/executives and routine employees show lower scores than industrial workers. In what concerns to *openness to new family forms*, entrepreneurs/executives and professionals/technicians show higher scores in this index than industrial workers; whereas self-employed are less open to new-family forms than industrial workers. Finally, in what concerns to *familialism*, routine employees and professional/technicians are less familialist than industrial workers.

To sum up, 1) family values are organized along three dimensions – familialism, child-centeredness, and openness to new family forms; 2) child-centeredness and familialism

decrease over cohorts, while openness to new family forms increase; and 3) individuals incorporate these dimensions, mainly in the frame of their generational context and social position. Gender has a secondary role, being a more differentiated factor regarding some specific topics of family life (items), but not in relation to the major organizing lines of family attitudes (indexes).

2.4. Profiles of transition to adulthood

The modes of transition to adulthood are fundamental to the differential construction of personal networks as they are a mirror of the individual's trajectory through multiple social settings and contexts of socialization. Some critical events and life transitions trigger the exchange of particular resources, and the entry into adult life is a crucial period in this respect (Bidart and Lavenu, 2005). Leaving school, entry into the labour market, setting up a house with a partner and the birth of a child; episodes of geographical mobility on these events, contribute to changing patterns of personal networks over time. The way individuals live objectively and subjectively the entry into adult life is intimately linked to their social conditions, namely, gender and social class structures (Bidart and Lavenu, 2005; Nico, 2011).

The study of the social markers, commonly used in the classical theorizations of the models of transition to adulthood in contemporary societies, offers a useful picture of the differences and commonalities between the lifecourses of individuals belonging to different generational backgrounds. By mapping whether individuals experienced certain transitions and by identifying the timing in which these experiences occurred during their life, we gain some understanding on how the transitions were organized in time and order. In order to get a whole and integrated picture of the modalities/formats of entry into adulthood, and not only a split depiction of each transition, we combined the calendars associated with each social marker. For that purpose, we ran a hierarchical cluster analysis, based on the Wards method and computing the Euclidean distances. This analysis only includes just those respondents who passed through all the transitions. The active variables were the mean age of individuals when experiencing each of the following transitions: end of educational career (living school definitely), entry into the labour market (first paid work), departure from the parental home (leaving parents' household definitely), first cohabitation (living everyday with the partner),

and arrival of the first child. We found a solution of four clusters as the more accurate one, in the sense of sociological and statistical intelligibility. By analysing the mean ages of individuals belonging to the four clusters, we are able to characterize the four transition profiles: *early public-late private*; *early entry*; *late-sequential*; and *longer educational career*.

Table 9 Profiles of transition: mean age at each transition by cluster (N=1061)

	Early	Late sequential	Early public – late private	Longer educational career
	33.3%	19.1%	14.3%	4.7%
Living school	11.93	19.22	12.68	36.54
First paid work	12.44	20.50	12.59	16.14
Living parents' home	17.94	22.90	29.56	21.83
First cohabitation	21.17	24.24	26.16	24.67
First child	23.43	26.51	28.43	27.51

The table above illustrates some of the main characteristics of the clusters based on the mean scores of the active variables. The larger cluster, which represents 33% of the respondents, is characterized by the early experience of all the transitions. These individuals left school and entered the labour market when they were only 12 years old and they left their parents' household when they were 18. The private transitions were experienced early in life, as respondents entered into conjugal life around 21, and had the first child aged 24. Due to the early timing of all the calendars we called this cluster as the *early* profile.

The second cluster, which represents 19% of the respondents, is characterized by the timing (postponed) and by the sequence. All the transitions were in chronologic order with an average gap of one to two years. These respondents left school around 19 and they began to work around 22. They then left the house of the family of origin at 23 and married around 24. The entry into parenthood occurred around age 26/27. This synchrony of the transitions drove us to name this cluster the *late-sequential* profile.

The third cluster is composed by those respondents who showed a dual pattern concerning the timing of transitions according to their public and private nature. These individuals made the public transitions – leaving school and entry into the labour market – concomitantly and very early in life (13 years old). Contrary to all other profiles, the exit from their parents'

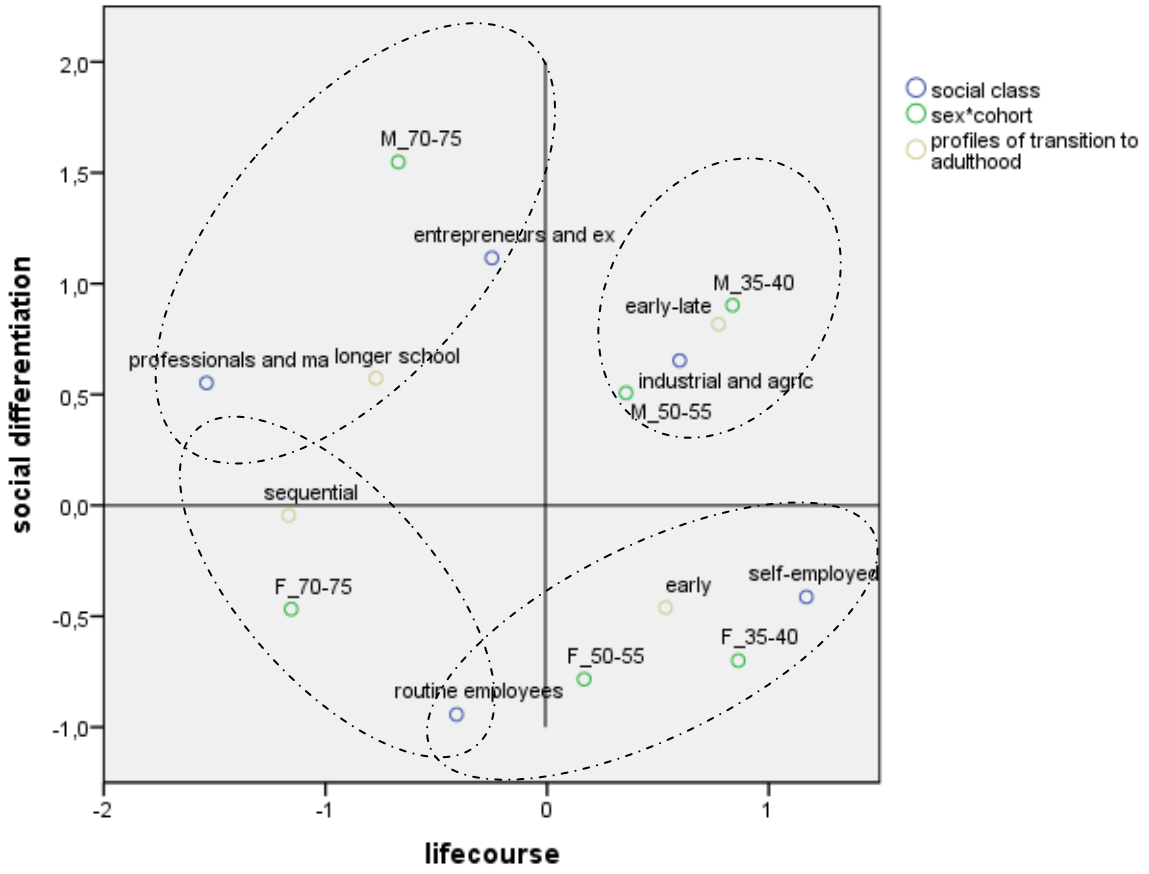
household was made after cohabitating and more close to the entry into parenthood. Moreover, the gap between entering the labour market and cohabitating is about 13 years distant. This clearly points to a huge hiatus between the public and the private sphere of transitions. In fact, these individuals began to live with their partners around 26 years old, they became parents at 28, and finally they left their parent's home just two years later, when they were 30 years old. Here, the exit from their parents' place is not an intermediary step between public and private as in the other profiles. This two-step transition pattern was defined as *early public-late private* profile.

Finally, the smaller cluster, which gathers only 4% of respondents, represents a specific pathway in which there is a particular transitional age that stands out with an extreme value: the late end of educational career. Actually, these individuals began to work quite early (around 16 years old), but they left their parents' home only six years later at age of 22. They then made the family formation transitions by living together with the partner in the same household around 25 and becoming a parent around 27/28. The synchrony is interrupted by the stretching of the schooling trajectories that end after the age of 35. This postponement of education is the main characteristic of this cluster, leading us to call it as *longer educational career*.

2.4.1. Situating the profiles of transition

To situate the profiles of transition in the social space defined by cohort, gender and social class, we carried out a multiple correspondence analysis. We introduced the transition profiles, gender, cohort and social class as active variables.

Figure 12 Spatial projection of the multiple correspondence analysis (N=1061)



The graph reveals the emergence of four major constellations of characteristics that seem to embed the profiles of transition to adulthood along two major dimensions (social differentiation mechanisms and lifecourse dynamics). In the upper left quadrant, we can see a constellation formed by men from the younger cohort, with highly qualified occupations, such as EE and PT, associated with the "longer educational career" profile of transition. In the right upper quadrant, we also see men but from the oldest and the middle cohorts, mainly industrial workers, who are associated with the "early public-late private" profile. In the lower left quadrant, we find the "late-sequential" profile, which is associated with women from the younger cohort, in-between technicians and professionals and routine employees. Finally, in the lower right quadrant, we find women from the oldest and the middle cohort, mainly independent workers, but also routine employees who are associated with the "early" profile

of transition. We also tested for the geographical region and we found that regional profiles are not a discriminating factor, i.e., the profiles are transversal to all spatial locations.

The profiles of transition seem to be constructed along two main dimensions: lifecourse and social differentiation mechanisms. The most striking result is the differentiation between men and women in the oldest and middle generations. The different profiles are not so much linked to their generational time but with their gendered socializations. Men were keener on transiting in a two-step way; and instead women were more likely to enter into adulthood very early in their lives. In the younger generation we can see a more diversified landscape with two pathways of transition, even if somehow gendered: the "late-sequential" pattern, which is more a female profile; and the "longer school career", which is mainly associated with men. Still, this last profile represents a small group of individuals, being the late-sequential more transversal to men and women from the younger cohort. This sequential format somehow challenges the idea of a massive de-standardization in more recent cohorts, as the order of transitions is not reversing and instead, we essentially witness to a chronological delay/postponement.

2.5. Biographical and family circumstances

We created several variables which provide information on the family and biographical circumstances of the individuals belonging to the three birth-cohorts. As we said, these three age-groups also represent different stages of the lifecourse as individuals are facing different demands associated with specific life transitions and critical events due to aging processes and family organization. Therefore, we will analyse the distribution of variables which can tell us more about the current family situation: work status, marital status, conjugal status, parental status and number of children, geographic mobility and type of household.

Work status has a mixed nature, in the sense that although it measures the employment situation, this indicator is quite entangled with aging processes, which explains why we analyse it in this section and not in the structural depiction. We considered four situations: paid work, unpaid work, retirement, and out of work. This last category includes individuals who are unemployed, studying, on sick leave, or performing military service. We will also focus on *marital status* (single, married, divorced, and widowed). Although this indicator

does not provide real information on whether individuals are actually living in a conjugal relationship, the articulated reading of this variable with *conjugal status* can give us some tips on the type of conjugality (e.g., being divorced and currently living in conjugality). We thus created three dichotomic variables which bring us closer to the situation of individuals in respect to conjugality, parenthood, and geographic mobility. *Conjugality status* tells us whether individuals are currently living with a partner even if they are not legally married; *parental status* tells us whether individuals have children who are alive; and finally, *geographical mobility* tells us whether individuals moved from their hometown municipality at least once in a lifetime. The following table shows the distribution of these variables across cohorts.

For the household composition, we used the typology defined by the National Statistical Institute with six categories: living alone, several persons, couple without children, couple with children, lone-parent, and complex. Yet, a warning should be made as the household composition can be tricky, since the typology is constructed from the outside, without taking into account the position of the respondent in the household arrangement. For instance, an individual from the youngest cohort living in couple with children household can be either in the position of parent or child.

Table 10 Distribution of family variables by cohort (N=1487)

Variable	Levels	1935-40	1950-55	1970-75	χ^2
Work status	Out of work	3.7	12.9	14.9	737.30**
	Unpaid work	13.5	11.1	3.2	
	Retirement	69.9	17.7	.4	
	Paid work	13.0	58.3	81.5	
Marital status	Single	3.4	6.6	29.8	387.87**
	Married	58.9	75.4	61.6	
	Divorced	4.1	9.4	8.5	
	Widowed	33.6	8.6	.2	
Conjugal status	Yes	60.3	80.9	74.6	52.27**
	No	39.7	19.1	25.4	
Parental status	Yes	90.8	92.4	76.2	68.48**
	No	9.2	7.6	23.8	
Geographic Mobility	Yes	62.1	64.5	58.2	(n.s.)
	No	37.9	35.5	41.8	

Number of children	None	9.2	7.6	23.8	239.61**
	1 child	21.6	20.9	35.0	
	2 children	30.7	45.2	32.0	
	3 children	15.4	18.6	7.3	
	>3 children	23.2	7.6	1.9	
Household	Leaving alone	24.7	8.2	9.9	326.68**
	Several persons	2.5	1.0	1.7	
	Couple without children	41.6	34.7	7.1	
	Couple with children	22.4	41.1	71.1	
	Lone-parent	0.5	0.8	1.7	
	Complex	8.4	14.2	8.6	

All family variables are significantly associated with cohorts, with the exception of geographic mobility. The transversal distribution of six out of ten individuals who have moved from their hometown in all cohorts may be related to the simplistic measure that we used, as we know that these cohorts present distinct geographical mobility profiles (see Wall et al., 2013). Actually, *geographical mobility*, whether internal within the country or heading abroad, has been one of the most significant dynamics of family formation and organization in Portuguese society over time. Based on this sample, Wall *et al.* (2013) explored the dynamics of migratory movements and family life across the three cohorts, stressing that if on the one hand, Portuguese society has witnessed a significant rural exodus over time, remaining an important marker of mobility life courses transversal to the three cohorts; on the other hand, there are key generational differences. First, there has been a clear increase in suburbanization among the younger generation; secondly, migrants have returned from the former colonies and from different European and non-European countries, which are visible among the older and middle generations (see Wall et al., 2013).

With respect to *work status*, in the oldest cohort most of the individuals are retired (69.9%); however, 13.0% are working even after the legal age of retirement and 13.5% of individuals are still working at home (female unpaid work). In the middle cohort, 58.3% are working for pay and 17.7% are already retired. The majority of the individuals from the younger cohort is working (81.5%), but 14.9% of young adults are out of the labour market. Overall, it is important to stress the decline in the rates of unpaid work, accentuated in the younger cohort (dropping from 13.5 and 11.1 to 3.2%).

In relation to *marital status*, in the oldest cohort 58.8 per cent are married and 33.6 per cent are widowed. In the middle cohort, the majority is married (75.4%) and there is a slight increase in the divorce rate (9.4%) compared with the previous cohort. In the youngest cohort there are a significant percentage of single people (29.8%), although the highest percentage is for married individuals (61.6%). Note that despite their age, 8.5% of individuals of this cohort are already divorced.

In terms of *conjugality*, 81% of individuals from the middle cohort live with a partner (married or not married), followed by the youngest cohort (72.6%), and the oldest cohort, with only 60.3%. Combining this indicator with the previous one, we see in the oldest and middle cohorts, a nearly total convergence between the percentage of married individuals and the percentage of those who live in conjugality. However, in the younger cohort 61.6% of the individuals are married and 74.6% are living in conjugality, which means that there are individuals living in informal cohabitation.

Regarding *parental status*, in the older and middle cohorts the great majority of individuals have children, while in the younger cohort; only ¾ of the individuals have children. If we look deeper, into the number of children, some interesting results come into view. For instance, the percentage of individuals in the oldest cohort with 3 or more children is 38%; whereas in the middle and younger cohorts they are only 26.2% and 9.2%, respectively. Instead, in the middle cohort the modal category is 2 children and in the younger cohort, the modal category is 1 child. In the younger cohort, as we said above, there are almost 25% of childless individuals. Still, we should recall that these individuals are still able to have children, and thus, their reproductive trajectories are still open.

Finally, if we look at the composition of the current *household*, we see that the types of living arrangements in which individuals are embedded are quite diverse across cohorts. In the oldest cohort, the modal category is "couple without children" (42%). However, two other types of household are quite expressive as 25% is leaving alone and 23% is leaving with the partner and children. In the middle cohort the majority of respondents are spread in two major arrangements: "couple without children" (35%) and "couple with children" (41%). Yet, there are nearly 14% of these individuals who is also living in complex arrangements. Finally, in the youngest cohort, the great part of the respondents live in couple with children (71%), but other residual categories are also represented in this age-group, such as "leaving alone" (10%), "extended family" (9%), and "lone-parent household" (2%). Again, the interpretation

of these results can be tricky, as we are not sure of the position of the respondent within the household structure. For instance, the 71% of respondents leaving in couple with children can be either in the position of the child or in the position of the parent.

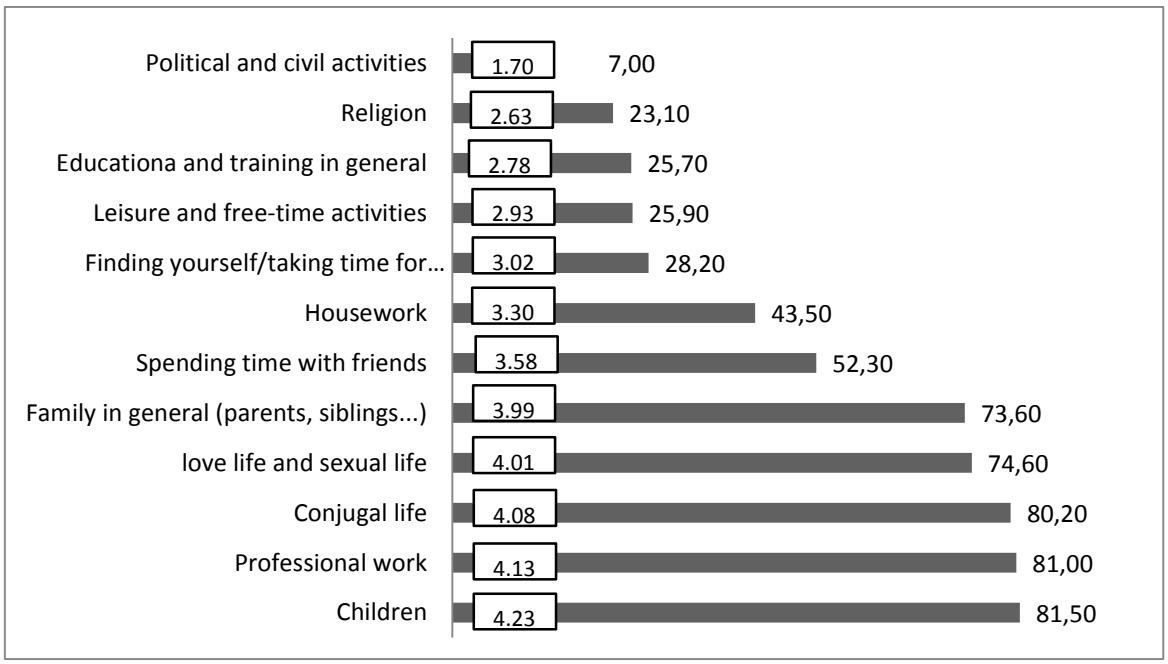
In sum, individuals belonging to the three cohorts are currently living in differentiated family and biographical circumstances either in what concerns to partnership situation, parental status and co-residence unit, or to their status in relation to the integration in the labour market, also associated with their age differences. Despite some similarities between the three and, assuming other residual profiles within each cohort, there are cores situations which are more common within each birth-cohort. Individuals from the oldest cohorts are mainly retired, even if some are working in paid and unpaid work (older women). Actually, there are individuals who are currently living in a partnership, mainly married; but also, those who are not in conjugality, due to the loss of the partner, and thus, are widowed. They have mainly more than three children, but the situation of having two children is also quite significant. They mainly live alone or in couple without children. Individuals from the middle cohort are mainly working. Most of them live in conjugality, mostly married, and it prevails the "2 children" rule. They commonly live in "couple without children" or "complex family household". Finally, the majority of individuals are in couple, but there is also a significant part that is not currently in a partnership. They have mainly 1 child, but there is also a significant proportion of childless individuals. The type of household which stands out is the "couple with children", but also "leaving alone" and "lone parent" are more common within this cohort. They are mainly integrated in the labour market, still there is a significant percentage if individuals out of the labour market.

2.6. Life domains of investment

Individual play several roles over the lifecourse and construct their life trajectories and personal networks moving over different settings of socialization. These contexts can be framed as *life foci,* which can comprehend several spheres of life, such as work, family, politics, and education. The lifecourse key-principle of agency underlines the active role of the individual in the construction of his/her biography, managing opportunities and constraints. Thus, we found it crucial to accede to this more subjective perception of the self-investments in several life domains over time, which underlie their motivations and choices.

For that reason, we focus on the subjective assessment individuals perceive as their level of investment (dedicated to…) in 12 domains over their lifecourse, namely: work, love and sexual life, spending time with friends, conjugal life, children, political and civic activities, housework, religion, family in general, finding yourself/taking time for yourself, education and training, and leisure. The scores range from 1-"no investment" at all to 5-"invested a lot".

Figure 13 Percentage of respondents who "invested a bit" and "invested a lot" on each life domain and the mean score of each domain



Political and civic activities is the focus in which individuals present the lowest level of investment, expressed by a low percentage of respondents who invested quite or a lot in this domain (only 7%) and an average score of M=1.70. Also with low levels of investment (with average scores lower than 3), we find "religion", "education" and "leisure", with around ¼ of the sample revealing having invested a bit or a lot in these three domains over the lifecourse. If we look at the dimensions which attained a higher level of investment (all with averages scores higher than 4), we find "children", "work", "conjugal life" and "love and sexuality". These are also the dimensions with a greater percentage of individuals who highly invested.

We compared the cohorts regarding the average score of investments in each item and we found that the cohorts are different concerning the investment towards almost all dimensions, with the exception of housework, political activities, family in general and love and sexual

life. Actually, regarding these four life domains the three cohorts show the same level of investment, as they highly invested in family and in love and sexual life; as well as they invested on an average level in housework; and little in political and civic activities.

Table 11 Average scores in each domain of investment by sex and cohort

	1935-40			1950-55			1970-75			Total		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Work	3.56	4.51	3.95	3.93	4.41	4.13	4.22	4.39	4.29	3.93	4.44	4.13
Love and sexual life	3.76	4.20	3.94	3.90	4.02	3.95	4.03	4.11	4.06	3.91	4.10	3.99
Spending time with friends	3.07	3.77	3.36	3.40	3.72	3.53	3.69	3.96	3.79	3.41	3.82	3.58
Conjugal life	4.14	4.26	4.19	4.09	4.11	4.10	3.95	4.01	3.97	4.05	4.12	4.08
Children	4.37	4.31	4.35	4.41	4.26	4.35	4.10	3.82	4.00	4.29	4.14	4.23
Political and civil activities	1.48	1.99	1.69	1.64	1.94	1.76	1.64	1.62	1.63	1.59	1.85	1.70
Housework	4.00	2.39	3.34	3.88	2.43	3.29	3.65	2.67	3.27	3.83	2.50	3.30
Religion	3.24	2.52	2.94	2.85	2.34	2.64	2.51	2.11	2.36	2.84	2.31	2.63
Family in general	4.07	3.93	4.01	4.06	3.80	3.95	4.08	4.00	4.05	4.07	3.91	4.01
Finding yourself	2.68	2.93	2.78	2.90	2.93	2.91	3.23	3.41	3.30	2.96	3.10	3.02
Education and training	2.06	2.58	2.27	2.59	2.74	2.65	3.35	3.27	3.32	2.72	2.87	2.78
Leisure/free-time activities	2.38	2.87	2.58	2.79	3.03	2.89	3.12	3.46	3.25	2.79	3.13	2.93

Cohort and gender play an important role on the variations of investment across all life domains. Regarding a main effect of cohort, findings show an increasing trend of investment in dimensions such as work, spending time with friends, education, finding time for yourself, and leisure; with all cohorts presenting different average scores (the one-way ANOVA tests were statistically significant). There is decreasing trend of investment across cohort in dimensions such as children, conjugal life and religion, in particular accentuated in the youngest cohort. We also tested for gender effects and there is a main effect of gender in all domains of investment, with the exception of conjugal life, in which men and women invested equally. Men invested more in work, spending time with friends, political activities, finding time for yourself, education and leisure; whereas women invested more than man in love and sexual life, children, housework, religion and family.

We also found interaction effects of sex and cohort in the following domains of investment: work, love and sexual life, spending time with yourself, political activities, housework and education (all the two-way ANOVA tests were statistically significant). "Work", "political activities" and "education" follow the same trend: in the older and middle cohorts, men invest more than women, while in the younger cohort this trend reverses and the mean of investment between men and women converge. "Housework" follows the inverse trend with women investing more than men in the oldest cohorts, while in the youngest cohort this gender gap diminishes, with no statistically significant differences. Regarding "spending time with friends" and "love and sexual life", men from the oldest cohort invest more than women, while this gender difference in both domains is attenuated in the middle and younger cohort.

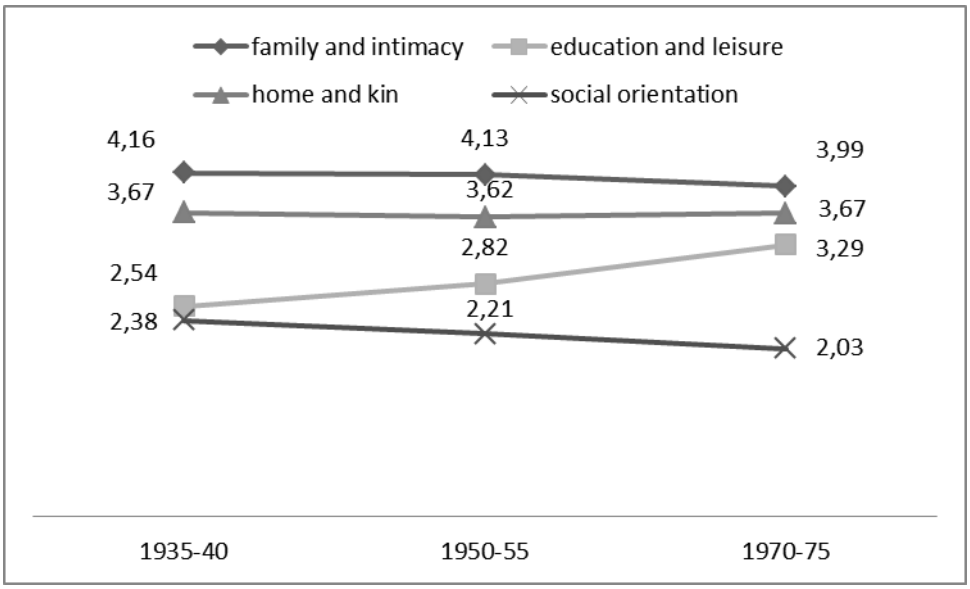
As we did for the attitudes towards family, due to the high number of items and in order to gain an integrated vision of the focus of investment across the cohort as and in the frame of gender and social class, we decided to create composite indexes, based on the correlations between the items. Thus, we carried out a factor analysis using the principal components' method of extraction, which resulted in a four-component structure which explains 73% of variance (table x). All the items with commonalities below 0.5 were excluded from the analysis, namely the items referent to: "work" and "spending time with friends". We retained the factors with *eigenvalue* score higher than 1. The component matrix will be presented in the following table, showing the coefficients (*loadings)* of each item in the components.

Table 12 Life foci: Item's loadings in each component

Domains of investment	Family life	Education and leisure	Home and kin	Social orientation
Conjugal life	0.92			
Love and sexual life	0.85			
Children	0.84			
Leisure and free-time activities		0.86		
Finding yourself/taking time for yourself		0.83		
Education and training		0.80		
Housework			0.77	
Family in general (parents, siblings, …)			0.69	
Religion				0.75
Political and civil activities				0.73
Variance explained (%)	23,5%	23,5%	13,9%	11,9%
Eigenvalue	-	-	-	-

The first component is *family life* and represents the investments in conjugality, love and sexual life and children (23.5% of variance explained). The second component is *education and leisure* as it is associated with investments in leisure, finding yourself and education (23.5% of variance explained). Thirdly, we have *home and kin* which underlines the investment in household tasks and extended family relations (13.9% of variance explained). And finally, the "social orientation" focus which includes investment in political and civic activities and in religion (11.9% of variance explained). Based on this structure in four main components, we constructed four life foci by computing the mean of the scores in the items which compose each component (scores also ranging from 1 to 5).

Figure 14 Life foci: average means of life investments' indexes by cohort (N=1487)



All cohorts differ in their level of investment on "family and intimacy", "education and leisure", and "social orientation", with the exception on the investment on "home and kin" ($F_{(1483,2)=}0.71$; n.s.).

Family life assumes a major role as the main domain of investment in all cohorts, being the life focus which reaches a higher level of investment ($M_{total}=4.09$). However, there is a tendency of decreasing of investment in the youngest cohort ($F_{(1483,2)=}4.53$; $\rho<.000$). Gender has no differential role on this domain, or an interactional effect.

The second life focus which also assumes a major domain of investment is *home and kin*, as the mean age is quite high in the total sample (M=3.65), regardless of the birth-cohort. However, when tested for the combination of gender and cohort, a main effect of sex and an interaction effect of both stood out: women invest more on "home and kin"; but the trend is reversing in the younger cohort, with a convergence of the investment between men and women.

"Education and leisure" is an average focus of investment as the total mean is around 3. However, unlike the trends associated with the other focus, there is an increasing investment in education over cohorts ($F_{(1483,2)=}101.22$; $\rho<.000$). Actually, there is also a main effect of gender and an interaction effect of gender and cohort: in general, men invest more in education and leisure than women; but this gap disappears in the younger cohort, with women investing more in this sphere than men.

Finally, *social orientation* shows the lowest level of investment in all cohorts ($M_{total}=2.03$). This is the dimension regarding which all respondents seem more disinvested. Actually, the investment on social activities is decreasing over cohorts, with the youngest one showing a mean score of 2.03 ($F_{(1483,2)=}17.57$; $\rho<.000$). A main effect of sex was found, revealing that women invest more in this domain than men in all cohorts.

In sum, there is a decrease of investment in *family and intimate life* and *social orientation* focuses over the three cohorts; while there is an increasing trend of investment in *leisure and education*. *Home and kin* is a main domain of investment of women, but in the frame of the younger cohort, we find a convergence of investment in "home and kin" between men and women. The opposite is revealed with "education and leisure" as men always invested more than women, and in the younger cohort the gender gap disappears, both show the same level of investment. It is interesting to note that *family life* and *Home and kin*, both focusing on family life are the main focus of investments across cohorts; whereas all the domains outside this sphere - *leisure and education* and *social orientation*- are less invested over life in all cohorts. Family is transversal to the life-span, whereas other activities are mainly invested in certain periods of life.

This seems to suggest a correspondence between the attitudinal profile of the younger cohort, in which the rejection of traditional division of labour and the adherence to the dual-earner model is incorporated by men and women from the younger cohort and manifested through this convergence of investments in work, education and housework.

Table 13 Summary of the core characteristics of the three birth-cohorts

	1935-40	1950-55	1970-75
Social and historical background	Dictatorship	Transition to democracy	Democracy
Structural	Industrial workers	Routine employees	Professionals and technicians
Normative	High family primacy and high child centeredness Low openness to new family form	High family primacy and high child centeredness Low openness to new family forms	High family primacy and average child centeredness Open to new family forms
Biographical (transition to adulthood)	Gendered pattern ♀ Early ♂ Early public – late private	Gendered pattern ♀ Early ♂ Early public – late private	Transversal: late-sequential ♂ Longer schooling
Family circumstances	Widowed Retired 3 children Couple without children	Married Working 2 children Couple without children	Married / single Working and out of work 1 child or childless Couple with children
Investments	Home and kin	Family life	Education and leisure Social orientation

3. Discussion

This multidimensional characterization (table 13) allows us to say that these three birth-cohorts are different both in a generational and in a life-stage and biographical sense, but most of all it reveals how these dimensions are closely intertwined with each other, giving a holistic meaning to each birth-cohort.

The differential distribution of key-variables measuring *social structures* across cohorts mirrors some major changes that have been operating in the last decades in Portuguese society, affecting the educational sphere, the processes of social recomposition and producing regional particularities in demographical terms. The consequences of a massive increase in access to education since the 1970s and 80s and the impact of longer school careers are visible through the increase in educational levels as well as of skilled occupations in the

youngest cohort, in particular of Professionals and Technicians. Social change also shows up in other broader processes, such as urbanisation and industrialisation undergone mainly since the 1960s. The consequences of rural exodus are in line with the decline of farmers and agricultural workers in the middle and younger cohorts and the emptying of the interior. In contrast to the oldest cohort, the middle and especially the youngest cohort is characterised by individuals living in urban centres with higher rates of new family living arrangements, such as stepfamilies, cohabitating couples and people living alone; while older adults are in the interior areas.

Attitudes to family life in Portuguese society are structured around three main lines: *child centeredness, familialism* and *openness to new family forms*. Findings show that the translation and incorporation of family change into the symbolic level of representations is not homogeneous, as some dimensions of family life are more rapidly integrated and reinterpreted in the frame of some cohorts than others – hybrid behavior. If familialism is transversal to the three birth-cohorts, even if with a relatively decrease of importance in the younger cohort, the acceptance of new family forms is a distinctive dimension of the younger one. Secondly, the variations of the structural conditions of life point to socially differentiated experiences of men and women, but foremost, they illustrate the importance of taking into account the processes of social recomposition in the internalization of values. Values and changing attitudinal patterns are not only associated with generational replacement and some gender effects but also with recomposition movements of social-class structures across and within cohorts. Class structures significantly mark the attitudinal patterns found in the cohorts, which stresses the intimate link between social and cultural dimensions of life.

The calendars associated to the *transitions to adulthood* show different profiles of entry into adulthood, with some profiles being more predominant in some cohorts than in others. The construction of different types of profiles is structured according to lifecourse dynamics and social differentiation, mainly the gendered experiences within generational frame. This analysis provides an idea of the trajectory of the individual which can fully impact the way networks are built up in the present. Interestingly, findings revealed a convergence of transitional profiles in the younger cohort, even if there is a residual profile strongly associated to men (longer-schooling). Moreover, this analysis of the formats of transitions in the three birth-cohort may be useful to reflect on the supposed de-standardization of life trajectories and transitions among the youngest cohort, as the *sequential profile* points to a postponement of transitions, but not necessarily a massive disorder or reversibility of

transitions. Still, even if these issues are important for the interpretation of personal networks, we would need more complementary information and this is not the main aim of this thesis.

The analysis of *family and biographical circumstances* across the three birth-cohorts reveals the different situations in which individuals are currently living, as a result of particular individual and family transitions they were facing at the moment of the survey. Despite some intra-cohort differentiation, we can put forward the predominant family situations in each cohort, which reinforces their life-stage distinctiveness. The oldest birth-cohort includes partnered and unpartnered individuals, through marriage or widowhood, respectively. Regarding their reproductive history, the rule of "3 or more children" prevails. These individuals are mainly retired, although there are some individuals who are still working in paid or unpaid work. The middle cohort is mainly composed of individuals who are mostly married, living in conjugality. Contrary to the previous cohort, the rule of "2 children" prevails. They are mainly working (paid work) and they are currently living in 'couple without children' (*empty nest*) and 'complex households' (for instance, including parents or parents in–law). Finally, in the youngest cohort we find partnered and unpartnered individuals, as marriage and celibacy status predominates. Among these young adults, who still have their reproductive trajectories open, the "1 child" rule prevails, but there is also a significant proportion of childless individuals. As we see, these individuals are not only different in terms of their profiles of transition, but also in relation to their current family situations, revealing how they are facing different biographical moments in their life.

Concerning the investment in the several life domains, findings revealed that individuals invested in five main *life foci* over the lifecourse, namely "work", "family and intimate life", "home and kin", "education and leisure", and "social orientation". The level of investment in these main life foci varies across the three birth-cohorts, revealing how these more subjective assessments also reveal the context of gender experiences in the frame of cohort.

This is of major importance as the differential investment in the life domains may contribute to the diversity of personal networks, for instance, to the openness or closure of the network towards the inclusion of non-kin. Also interesting is the parallel that we may draw between investments and attitudes, as we may identify some consistencies between the two levels in each birth-cohort. For instance, we can find congruence between the rejection of the male-breadwinner model in the younger cohort, and the convergence of men and women's investment in education and housework in this cohort. Again, this reinforces the

interdependency between the different levels, in this case, the normative and subjective conditions of life.

Actually, this is just an example of the recursive relationship between the structural, normative, family-biographical, and subjective factors which characterizes the three birth-cohorts, as they are fully interrelated. If in one hand, the constellation of factors gives consistency to the cohorts, on the other hand, this intertwining may represent a problem to disentangle the effects of each factor.

CHAPTER II - Understanding the principles of relational proximity: a first picture of the morphological composition of personal networks

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a descriptive analysis of the morphological properties of personal networks across the three birth-cohorts, based on the salience of particular key-attributes of its members (alters).

This topographical exercise will contribute to the study of two main issues. First, the analysis of the compositional aspects will allow us to uncover generative principles of closeness, which seem to guide individuals' relational choices and thus underpin the construction of relational proximity. Second, it will enable us to understand how the action of these principles is shaped by several factors operating at different levels: lifecourse dynamics, socially differentiated contexts, and family biographical circumstances.

In order to explore these two main issues, we will examine the salience of the following attributes:

- the *network size* (number of alters included);
- the *type of tie* with ego, in particular the *kinship salience*, and the comparison with the *demographic reservoir*;
- the *sex* and *educational level* of alters as homophily status mechanisms;
- the *duration* of the relationship;
- the *valence* of the relationship (the existence of negative persons and the existence of conflictive relationships);
- the existence of a *co-residence* history with ego;
- and the *perception of as-family* (considering the close person as family, independently of the kinship status)

Overall, the analysis of each attribute will include: a *descriptive analysis* of the distribution of the attribute in the total sample and across cohorts (whenever other variables will be useful for the description, we will also take them into consideration); and an *inferential analysis* to explore the impact of different shaping factors on the salience of the attribute, such as: lifecourse (cohort), structural (gender and social class), and family-biographical (partnership and parental status, and household composition) variables.

In this chapter, we will only consider the compositional features of personal networks, as the functional and structural properties will be studied in-depth in the Chapter 4, which is entirely dedicated to the structural analysis of expressive, instrumental and normative interdependencies in a more complex and systematic approach. Moreover, since our concern in this chapter is to provide a first overview of personal networks, the aim is to carry out a detailed description of network compositional properties, without any attempt to combine the attributes. Contrary to the configurational analysis that will be carried out in the following chapter, here we will employ a descriptive view of personal networks rather than a holistic perspective.

Our unit of analysis will be the respondent (ego). Since we want to understand the salience of certain characteristics in individuals' networks, we will use the same indicator to measure the representativeness of each attribute in the network. The indicator will be the average proportion of alters with a specific attribute in the network. The following example (table 14) illustrates how we calculated the proportion of female alters in the network of each respondent. At the end, we are able to say that individuals show, on average, a proportion of x female alters in their networks.

Table 14 Example of calculation of the average proportion of female alters

Ego	Size of the network (number of total alters)	Number of female alters	Proportion of female alters in the network (number of female alters/size)
A	4	4	4/4 (1)
B	4	1	¼ (0.25)

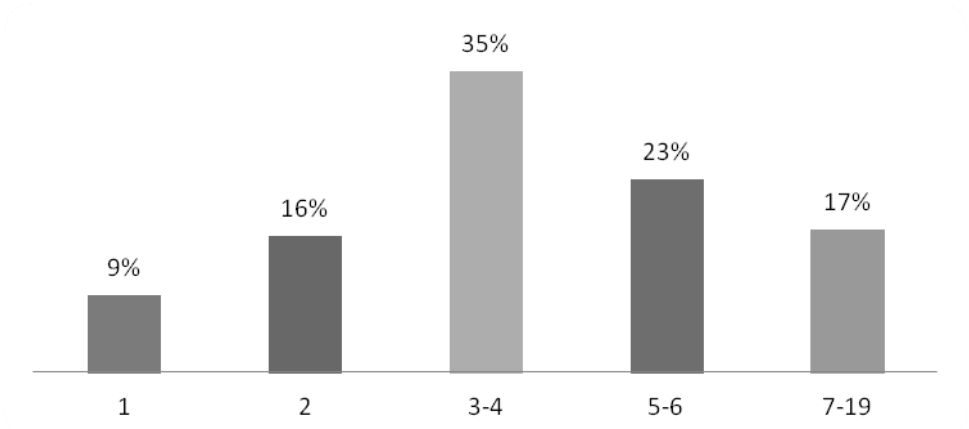
The results vary between 0 and 1. The value 1 means that all network members have this specific attribute. The results can be interpreted in two heuristic ways. For instance, a proportion of 0.5 can be read as 5 in 10 alters, or 50% of the network members.

2. A first picture of personal network

2.1. Network size

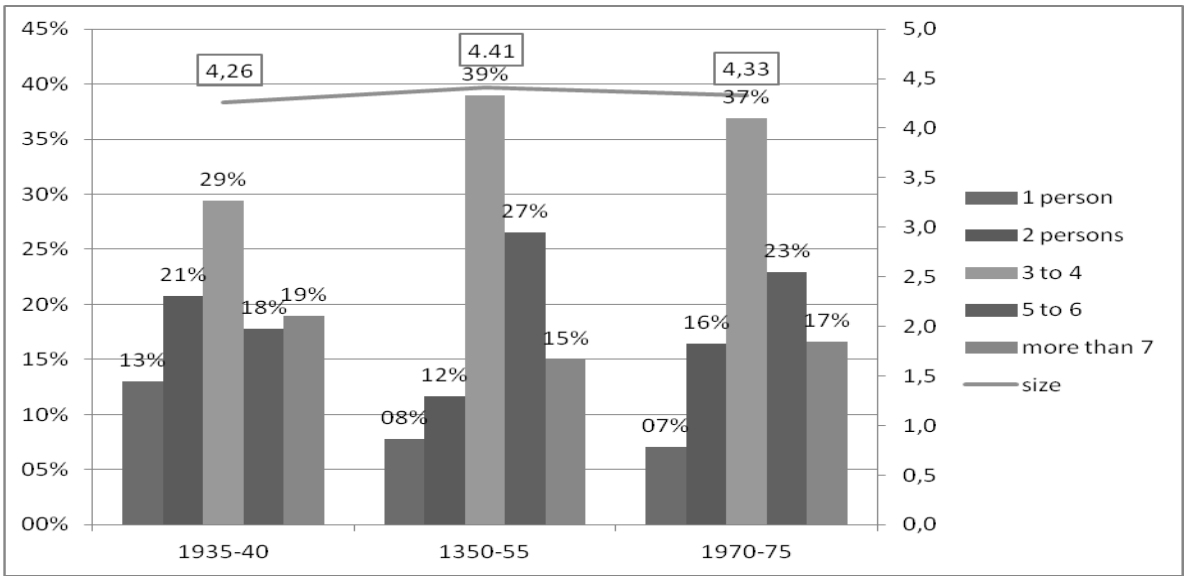
One of the properties commonly studied as an important measure of the morphological aspects of personal networks is the size, i.e., the number of members included. This indicator is often used to infer the degree of social integration of individuals, based on the assumption that the possession of large networks may increase the potentialities of support. However, size can be a tricky indicator since one can have a large network but its members may not be engaged and exchange resources with each other, or only in particular periods and events. In the words of Granovetter, they may be defined as weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). Thus, it is important to complement this analysis with the effective occurrence of exchanges, i.e., the number of active members exchanging support in the potential pool of the total members, also known as density. Nonetheless, it is important to examine this personal-network indicator as a measure of the potential support of the network. The size values range from 1 to 19 members and the average size of the total sample is 4.34 with a standard deviation of 2.60. Networks are thus quite small, given the possibility of mentioning up to 19 members. Nonetheless, the value of the standard-deviation unveils a certain level of dispersion of network size. As shown in figure 15, the modal size in the total sample is 3, but 25% of the total sample mentions only 1 to 2 persons in their networks. On the other hand, 40% of the sample shows larger networks with 5 or more members.

Figure 15 Percentage of respondents in each size-category in the total sample (N=1487)



We may thus ask whether the average size of personal networks differs among the three *cohorts*. We tested the mean differences of network-size across cohorts, by running a one-way ANOVA, and we concluded that there is no statistical significant difference between the average network-size in the three cohorts ($M_{1935\text{-}40}$=4.26; $M_{1950\text{-}55}$=4.41; $M_{1970\text{-}75}$=4.33; $F_{(1484,2)}$=0.36, p=n.s.). Still, given the above mentioned dispersion, we decided to create a categorical variable with five levels in order to capture some intra-cohort differentiation that may be hidden behind the mean differences (1=1 person; 2=2 persons; 3=3 to 4 persons; 4=5 to 6 persons; and 5=more than 7 persons) (Fig.16).

Figure 16 Average network-size and distribution of size-categories by cohort (N=1487)



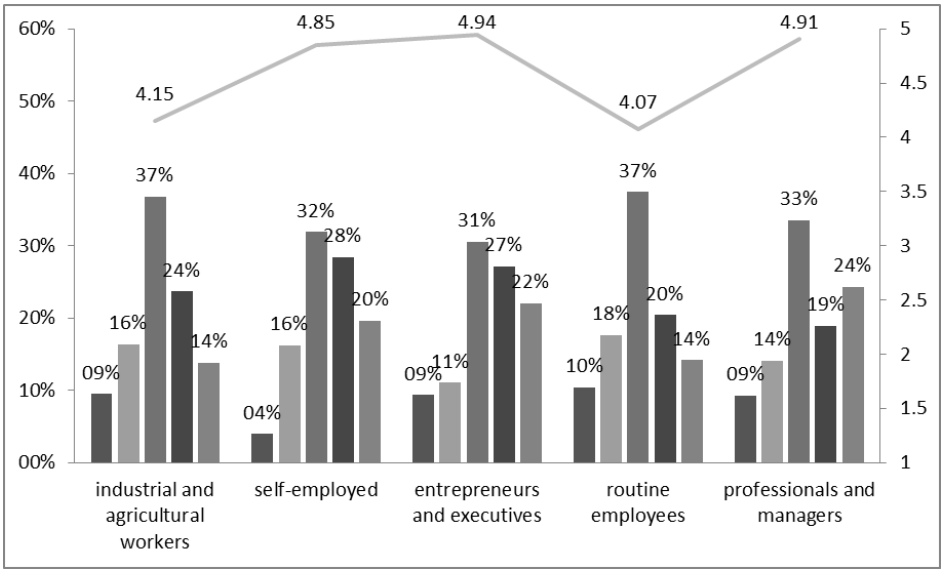
Individuals from the oldest cohort are embedded in networks with an average size of 4.26 with a standard-deviation of 3. As in the total sample, the value of the standard-deviation indicates a high variability of the network-size inside this cohort. This means that if on one hand, old people present small networks, with 34% of respondents from this cohort having 2 or less network members; on the other hand, we can see that nearly 40% of respondents from this cohort have large networks, ranging from 5 to more than 7 network members. This seems to suggest different types of configurations in the same cohort, ranging from more restricted arrangements to larger ones, and thus perhaps providing different types of social capital. Regarding the middle cohort, nearly 39% of respondents have medium-sized networks of 3 to 4 persons (M=4.41; SD=2.41). Only a minority of these individuals has networks smaller than 2 persons (20%). We also find a large percentage of individuals with networks composed of 5 to 6 persons or more (42%). This may indicate more extended arrangements in this generation. Finally, the younger cohort shows a very similar distribution to the middle one, again with a dominance of medium-sized networks (M=4.33; SD=2.40) and a low percentage of respondents with very small networks (23%).

Figure 17 Average network-size by sex in each cohort (N=1487)

We also tested for *gender differences* by running an independent sample t-Test. Data revealed that there is no statistical significant difference between the network-size of men and women (t=0.689, p=n.s.). However, despite the absence of a main effect of *birth-cohort* and *gender* on the network-size, we found an interaction effect between the two variables. As shown in figure 11, in the oldest cohort, men have larger networks than women (4.54 compared with

4.07), while in the middle cohort this trend reverses, with a convergence between men and women. The difference is especially significant in the youngest cohort, with male networks showing an average size of 3.98 and female networks showing an average size of 4.55. In the middle cohort, men and women are much more alike in what regards to the network size (4.44 for women and 4.35 for men).

Figure 18 Average network-size and distribution of size-categories by social class



Interestingly, if we compare the network size by social class, we find that the average size varies across the different occupational positions ($F_{(1469,4).}$ = 610, ρ<.000). *Industrial workers* and *routine employees* show the lowest average network sizes, while *executives and entrepreneurs*, *professionals and technicians* and *self-employed* present the largest networks. The distribution of the categories of size reinforces these findings; with 25% of the *industrial workers* and 28% of the *routine employees* having networks with less than 2 alters; while *self-employed*, *executives/entrepreneurs* and *professional/technicians* are less integrated in small networks. Regarding the largest networks, we find 49% of the *executives and entrepreneurs*, 48% of the *self-employed* and 43% of the *professionals and technicians* presenting networks with more than 5 members; while only 38% of *industrial workers* and 34% of the *routine employees* show networks with a size above 5.

To get a more complex view of the variables that may account for the network-size variation, we ran a linear regression analysis in three blocks, which entered subsequently in the model.

Table 15 Regression model for network-size (unstandardized coefficients)

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	0,14	0,22	-0,09
	1970-75	0,07	0,15	-0,01
Men	Women		0,13	0,14
Industrial worker	Self-employed		0,71***	0,67***
	Entrepreneurs/executives		0,83***	0,92***
	Routine employees		-0,12	-0,06
	Professional/technicians		0,43*	0,76***
Partner	No partner			-0,15
Children	No children			-0,86***
Couple with children	Living alone			-1,31***
	Several persons			-0,24
	Couple without children			0,03
	Lone-parent			1,70*
	Extended			,580**
R^2		.00	.02	.10
F		.36	3.88***	10.21***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

Confirming what we have said before, birth-cohort has no significant effect on the average size, even with the introduction of other predictors. When we add the structural variables (model 2), we obtain an effect of social class, with individuals positioned as SE, RE and PT having larger networks than those pertaining to the category of industrial workers. Finally, the introduction of family variables (model 3) reveals the impact of parental status and household composition on network size. Those who do not have children and who are currently living alone have smaller networks than those with a partner and children. By contrast, those who live in complex family arrangements and lone-parent households have larger networks than those who live in households of couples with children. Actually, the addition of biographical variables improves the model from R^2=3.88 to R^2=10.21.

In short, personal networks are in average quite small (M=4.34). Even with the possibility of mentioning up to 19 network members', in general respondents restricted the list to between 4

and 5 elements[2]. Regarding the average size, there is no significant statistical difference between the three cohorts, but the size dispersion within each cohort suggests some intra-differentiation. An in-depth look at the distribution of different categories of size in each cohort reveals that the oldest one has a higher percentage of individuals including less than 2 members in their networks. Regarding gender differences, data revealed no main effect on the average size, but we found an interaction effect between gender and cohort. Men from the oldest cohort have larger networks than women, but this tendency reverses in the middle and younger cohort, with women having larger networks than men. These size differences are more expressive in the oldest and youngest cohorts. The gender difference in the oldest cohort may be related with the loss of a partner among women from the oldest cohort, since demographically men die first, while for the younger cohort it might be related to the calendars of transition to family formation, in the sense that women entry into conjugality and parenthood before men, which may facilitate the inclusion of more alters. The regression model shows that network size is predicted by social class, parental status and household composition.

2.2. Kinship salience

The importance of kinship as a bonding mechanism generating feelings of closeness has always been an important issue in the sociological debate, re-emerging as a controversial topic in the individualisation discourses on the supposed decline of family in late modernity. Therefore, it is of major interest to analyse the salience of kinship and the representativeness of specific ties in personal networks.

Based on the composition of personal networks in terms of the type of ties which link the respondent to the network members, we began by considering the formal distinction between kinship ties (blood, marriage and spiritual ties) and non-kinship ties. We calculated the number of kin ties and non-kin ties in each individual's network and then coded the networks of the 1487 respondents as *kin-based* (all alters are kin), *mixed* (at least 1 alter is non-kin and

[2] We should highlight that this low value of the mean size can be associated to methodological issues, such as an interactional effect of interviewer-respondent and due to experimental fatigue in reaction to the time of the questionnaire application (see methodological chapter)

1 alter is kin) and non-kin based (all alters are non-kin). The following example (table 15) illustrates how three respondents with the same number of alters (network size) were classified in three different categories according to the number of kin and non-kin ties.

Table 16 Example of networks' coding as kin-based, mixed and non-kin based

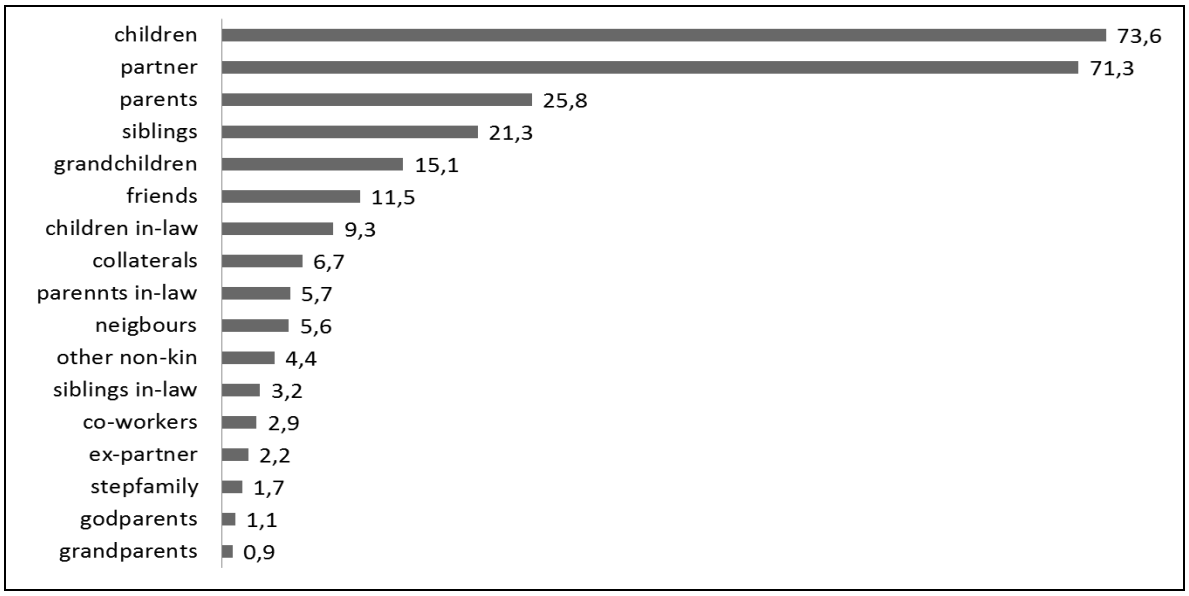
Id	Respondents	Network-size	Kin	Non-kin	Classification
1	Jose	3	3	0	Kin based
2	Maria	3	2	1	Mixed
…	…	…	…	…	…
1487	Carlos	3	0	3	Non-kin based

A first result indicates that 68.5% (1019) of the respondents present exclusively *kin-based* networks, while 31.5% (468) of the respondents include at least 1 non-kin tie. Among these respondents, 28.2% (420) present mixed networks and 3.2% (48) just include non-kin ties. This first finding reveals the predominance of family bonds linked by kinship principles in personal relationships, but it also points to some pluralisation through the integration of non-kin ties by more than ¼ of the sample.

A detailed analysis of the *types of tie cited by the respondents* shows the predominance of specific categories, and the secondary role of others (fig.19). 'Children' and 'partner' are the categories which were more frequently cited by the respondents. Nearly 74% of the respondents cited at least one child (51.9% cited at least 1 daughter and 50.4% cited at least 1 son) and nearly 71% cited the partner. Also with a significant prevalence, we found the categories of 'parents' (26%) and 'siblings' (21%).

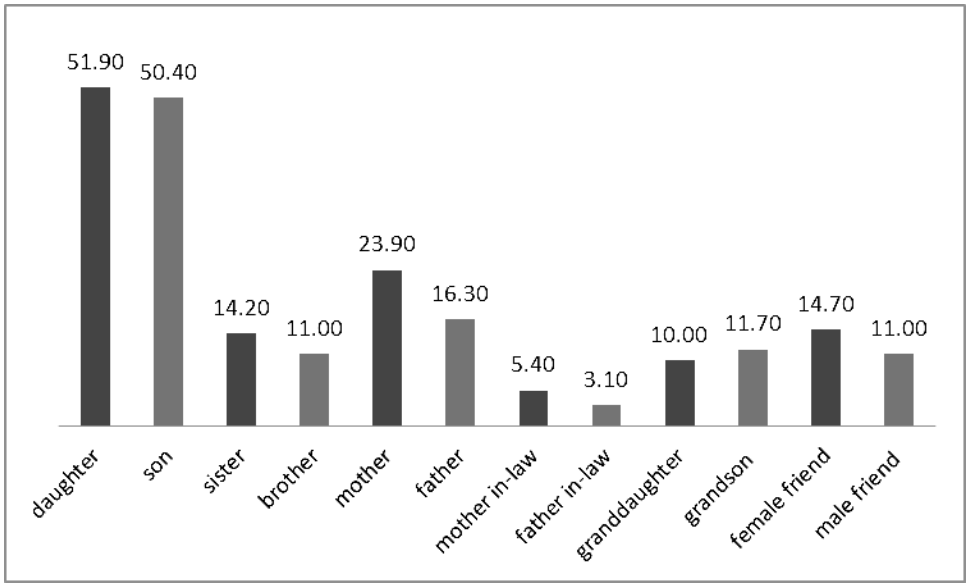
Figure 20 shows the distribution of the type of tie according to the sex of the alters. We found some differences in the case of parents, with mothers being cited by 24% of the respondents while fathers were cited by 16%. More attenuated differences were also found regarding friends, siblings and parents in-law; with female friends, sisters and mothers in-law being more frequently reported than their male equivalents. Interestingly, the category "grandchildren" follows the opposite trend, as grandsons are more frequently cited than granddaughters.

Figure 19 Percentage of respondents citing each type of tie (N=1487)



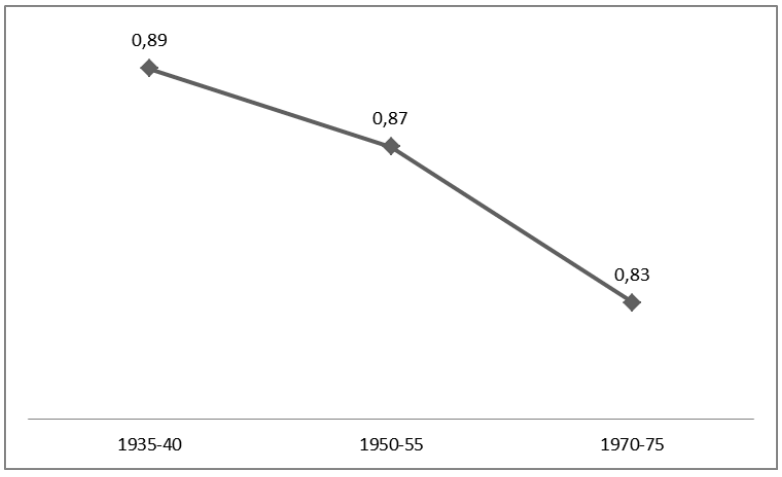
An interesting aspect is the fact that female elements within these categories of ties – mother and sister - are more frequently cited than the male equivalents. The difference is especially notorious in the case of the category ‘mother’, which is cited by 23.9% of the respondents compared with ‘fathers’, which is cited by 16.3%. Within siblings, the differences are not so sharp, as the category of ‘sister’ is cited by 14.2% of the respondents, whereas “brother” is cited by 11.0% of the respondents. Friends are cited by 11% of the respondents, being the non-kin category more frequently reported by the respondents. More distant or secondary kin (aunts, in-laws, etc.) and also other types of non-kin (neighbours, co-workers, domestic employee, etc.) are less represented in personal networks. The in-depth analysis of the ties will be developed in the next chapter, which will be exclusively dedicated to the combination of the types of ties.

Figure 20 Percentage of respondents citing each type of tie (N=1487)



Going back to the variations of kinship salience, we compared the three cohorts in terms of the *average proportion of kin*, by running a one-way ANOVA (figure 21). The multiple comparison tests show that the average proportion of kin in personal networks is significantly different between the younger and the two oldest cohorts, with the younger one having less network members linked by a kinship tie than the two others (F=6.83, p=.001). Actually, there is no significant difference between the middle and the older cohorts. If we shift our look from the younger to the oldest in a life span reasoning, we can also interpret these results in the sense that as individuals move over their lives, their personal networks become more restricted to kin.

Figure 21 Average proportion of kin alters by cohort (N=1487)



We also tested for a main effect of gender, as well as for the interaction effect between gender and cohort on the average proportion of kin, but we found no statistical significant differences in both cases.

Table 17 Regression model for proportion of kin alters (unstandardized coefficients)

Reference category	Active categories	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	-,01	-,01	-,04**
	1970-75	-,05***	-,04*	-,04*
Men	Women		,00	,00
Industrial worker	Self-employed		-,01	-,02
	Entrepreneurs/executives		-,07***	-,07***
	Routine employees		-,02	-,01
	Professional/technicians		-,11***	-,06***
Partner	No partner			-,05**
Children	No children			-,16***
Couple with children	Living alone			-,11***
	Several persons			-,06
	Couple without children			,02
	Lone-parent			,10
	Extended			,009
R2		0.01	0.03	0.17
F		6.59***	6.45***	20.98***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

Birth-cohort is a major significant effect on the proportion of kin as the effects are transversal to all models, with the youngest cohort standing out as the one whose networks have a lower proportion of kin. The introduction of structural variables (model 2), reveals a significant effect of social class, with PT and EE having a lower proportion of kin when compared to industrial workers. Finally, the introduction of family variables (model 3) discloses the importance of biographical-family circumstances on the proportion of kin, but also a new effect of cohort, with individuals from the middle cohort showing a lower proportion of kin. Those who do not live in conjugality and do not have children and those who are living alone

have a lower proportion of kin than those with a partner and children[3]. Actually, the addition of biographical variables improves the model from R^2=6.45 to R^2=20.98.

2.3. Demographic reservoir

To control for the effect of the *demographic reservoir* in the type of alters reported, we compared the number of partners, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, fathers and mothers alive with the number of elements cited in each of these categories. Those were the only categories we had access concerning this information. By comparing the availability of these ties in the pool of relatives with their effective inclusion in the network of close persons, we can explore the possibilities of selection/choice of the respondents and examine the degree of social desirability reflecting the normative pressure to mention some types of ties (degree of constraint and institutionalism).

Table 18 Types of ties available and types of ties cited (% of respondents)

Type of tie	Percentage of respondents who have this type of tie alive	Percentage of respondents who cited this type of tie
Partner	72.6	71.3
Children	85.3	73.6
Son	62.5	50.4
Daughter	62.5	51.9
Siblings	84.5	21.3
Brother	66.6	11.0
Sister	64.0	14.2
Parents	52.6	25.8
Father	36.2	16.3
Mother	48.1	23.9

[3] Drawing on the same data as we are using in this work, Gouveia and Widmer (2014) stressed the operation of mechanisms of social differentiation in the orientation towards kinship. The authors found that lifecourse, represented by birth-cohort, is a major shaping factor, but family circumstances (mobility, conjugality and partnership status), structural factors (social class and geographic area) and normative contexts (level of family primacy and openness to family diversity) play a significant role on the kinship salience within each cohort (for detailed information on this topic, see Gouveia and Widmer, 2014).

Grandchildren	43.1	15.5
Grandson	34.0	10.7
Granddaughter	32.1	10.0

Table 18 reveals valuable information which can improve our knowledge on the processes of choice in the inclusion of close relationships in personal networks. Contrasting the two columns, we can obtain an idea of the degree of selectivity in individuals' construction of networks. "Partner" is the type of tie which is both available and chosen to be included in the networks, with the percentage of individuals who have and report a partner almost overlapping. "Children" is the following category with a quite high degree of overlap between the two measures: nearly 85% of the respondents have children and 74% of the respondents report at least one child. Again, elements from the family of procreation seem to reveal a primacy in relation to other ties. When we turn to "siblings", a considerable difference stands out. If on the one hand, 85% of the respondents have their siblings alive, on the other hand, only 21% of the respondents included siblings in their networks, which means that among those who have siblings, only ¼ considered at least one sibling as an important person. Parents are mentioned by 26% of the respondents, yet 53% of the respondents have their parents alive. Again, respondents are selective both regarding mother and father, as only half of those who have at least one parent, cited him/her as close person. Finally, respondents are also quite selective in respect to grandchildren; 43% of the respondents have grandchildren and only 16% included them in the network.

In short, personal networks are mainly composed of kinship ties, as nearly 70% of the respondents have only-kin based networks. The core representatives of this prominence of kin are primarily the elements of the family of procreation (partner and children): they are the mostly cited ties and they are automatically included in personal networks, without "passing" by any selection filter. Elements from the family of orientation are also important. However, individuals are more selective regarding parents and siblings, as not all the respondents who have them available in their pool of relatives have included them in their networks. Although there is a slight tendency for respondents to report the mother and the sister more than the father and the brother, the differences are not sharp, and the selection among the relatives available is not at all regulated by this gender norm. Friends are the most relevant non-kin category, cited by 12 % of the respondents. Actually the inclusion of non-kin seems to be gradual over cohorts, as the proportion of kin decreases. The regression model shows that

cohort, social class and family biographical variables are shaping factors of the proportion of kin in personal networks.

2.4. Valence of relationships

Close relationships are known as potentiating both solidarity and conflict. The existence of relational tension between close persons was already acknowledged in Cooley's work on the importance of the primary group (Cooley, 1909); others have been developing these ideas using the concept of ambivalence (Lusher, 2002; Widmer, 2010; Connidis, 2010); and others have distinguished between positive and negative ties (Lemieux, 1999). As we mentioned in the methodological part, the name generator was constructed in a way that allowed individuals to mention not just those important persons with whom they have a significant and supportive relationship (that we will name hereafter as positive ties), but also those who are important even if there are some tensions, i.e., even if the respondent "does not get along with them" (that we will name hereafter as negative ties). Interestingly, 24% of the respondents (361) reported at least one important person with whom they do not get along with, which means that closeness is also created in a context of tension and not just based on purely positive figures/interactions. This means that 76% are networks only composed of positive persons. An in-depth look at these negative alters reveals the main types of ties who are considered as such (table 19). Note that the unit of analysis in the following table is the alter (network members) and not ego (respondent).

Table 19 Percentage of each type of tie in the total of "negative" alters (N=482 alters)

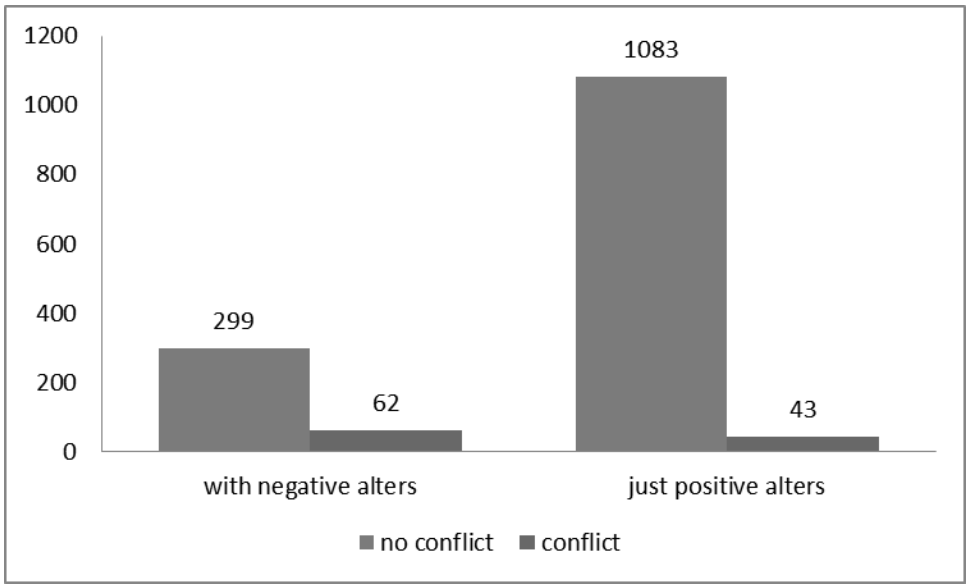
Type of tie	Frequency	Percentage
Partner	210	43.57
Ex-partner	62	12,86
Neighbour	35	7.26
Sibling	32	6.64
Friend	27	5.60
Sibling in-law	24	4.98
Acquaintance	15	3.11
Coworker	12	2.49
Parent in-law	10	2.08
Others	7	1.45
Children	7	1.45

Children in-law	7	1.45
Boss	6	1.24
grandchildren	5	1.04
Parents	5	1.03
Aunt	4	0.83
Ego's cousin	4	0.83
Aut partner	2	0.41
Godparents	2	0.41
Stepparents	1	0.21
Grandparents	1	0.21
Nephew	1	0.21
Children's friends	1	0.21
Domestic employee	1	0.21
Stepchildren	1	0.21
	482	100.00

Interestingly, “partner” is the predominant negative alter, representing 44% of the total negative alters. Also with a significant percentage, we find the ex-partner with 13%. “Neighbours” are the non-kin category more represented among the negative alters, with 7%, followed by “friends” with 6%, “acquaintances” with 3% and “co-workers” with 2%. “Siblings” and “siblings in-law” also stand out in the negative ties, as 7% of the negative alters are siblings and 5% are siblings in-law. Other distant kin are less significantly reported as negative ties.

Although conflict was included in the functional properties and it was studied in the survey through a sociometric matrix, we found it relevant to associate the above mentioned status of being a “positive” or a “negative” alter with having conflict or not with ego or other network members. Exceptionally, we will analyse a functional indicator here. So, regarding conflict in the network, only 7.1% (105) of the respondents mentioned the existence of conflict within their network; whereas 92.9% of the networks do not report conflict. The fact of being able to report “negative” persons drove us to analyse if those networks which include “negative” persons would be the ones where prevailed conflict. The cross-tab shows that 17% of the 361 networks with negative persons reported the existence of conflict. Instead, just 3.8% (43) of the 1126 networks composed of positive members have reported the existence of conflict in their networks.

Figure 22 Percentage of conflictive and non-conflictive networks by positive and negative networks



These findings reveal three important things: for at least ¼ of the sample, important persons include alters with whom ego has positive interaction, but also with whom they do not get along; second, "negative" persons for ego do not necessarily engage in frequent conflict relationships, as the overlap between negative alters and the existence of conflict appears only in 17% of the cases where a network has a negative person; and finally, among positive alters, even if in a less extent, there can also exist conflictive relationships.

To explore the role of some key variables as predictors of the proportion of "negative" alters, we ran again a linear regression analysis with three blocks which entered subsequently in the model.

Table 20 Regression model for proportion of negative alters (unstandardized coefficients)

Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	,02*	,02*	,03***
	1970-75	,05***	,05***	,05***
Men	Women		-,05***	-,05***
Industrial worker	Self-employed		,00	,00
	Entrepreneurs/executives		,01	,00
	Routine employees		-,01	-,01
	Professional/technicians		,01	-,01
Partner	No partner			,03***

Children	No children			,06***
Couple with children	Living alone			,03*
	Several persons			-,01
	Couple without children			,00
	Lone-parent			-,05
	Extended			,00
R2		.02	.05	.11
F		14.59***	11.42***	13.39***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

Birth-cohort is the main predictor as their predictive value remains while adding other factors. Individuals born in the middle and younger cohort include a high proportion of negative alters than those belonging to the oldest one. The introduction of structural factors reveals the importance of gender but not of social class, with women including a lower proportion of negative alters than men. Finally, not having a partner or children and living alone increases the inclusion of a higher proportion of negative alters. The explanatory value of the model remains constant across the blocks.

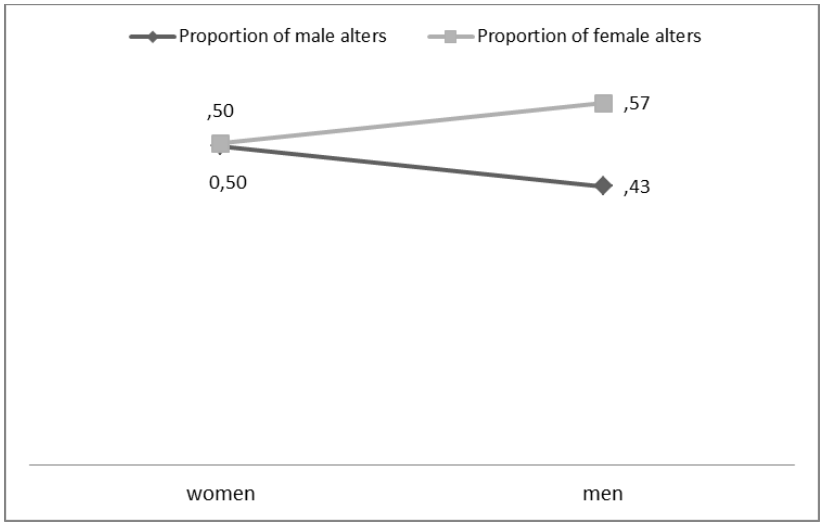
2.5. Homophily criteria based on structural variables

Education and gender are classical characteristics which are commonly studied to assess the degree of homogamy between individuals and their network members (Lazersfel and Merton, 1954; Lauman, 1966, McPerson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001). Following the homophily principle, also known as the *like-me hypothesis*, "social interactions tend to take place among individuals with similar lifestyles and socioeconomic characteristics" (Lauman, 1966). Actually, two types of homophily can be distinguished: *status homophily*, in which similarity is based on ascribed or acquired socio-demographic characteristics (race, ethnicity, sex, age, religion, education, occupation); and *value homophily*, in which similarity is based on values, attitudes, and beliefs (Lazersfel and Merton, 1954). Therefore, we will explore the proportion of female and male alters and the proportion of low, medium and highly educated alters in personal networks. We did not focus on age in this topic as the existence of multigenerational ties will be infered in a more complex way through the configurational analysis based on the type of ties, and also, since age will be taken into consideration while analysing the duration of relationships.

2.5.1. Gender

Regarding the proportion of female and male members in the networks, there is no evidence of a gender preference for network members of the same sex. In fact, due to the majority of heterosexual partnerships, there is a main effect of sex: men always have more female members and women always have more male members (F=19.25, p=.000) (figure 23).

Figure 23 Average proportion of male and female alters by female and male respondents (egos) in the total sample



Actually, if we test for the impact of other variables on the proportion of females, the main predictor is still gender, pointing to the same cross-sex trend: women have less female members than men. The inverse is also true, i.e. women have always more male members than men. Additionally, we find the effect of cohort and household on the proportion of females in personal networks. Individuals from the middle cohort include more women than those from the oldest cohort; and individuals living alone or in complex households also have a higher proportion of women than those living in couple with children (we did not test the proportion of male alters as it is the inverse proportion and thus, the model will be the same with the inverse direction).

Table 21 Regression model for proportion of female alters (unstandardized coefficients)

Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	,03	,03	,04*

	1970-75	,02	,02	,03
Men	Women		-,06***	-,07***
Industrial worker	Self-employed		-,01	-,01
	Entrepreneurs/executives		,03	,03
	Routine employees		,02	,02
	Professional/technicians		,02	,01
Partner	No partner			,04
Children	No children			,00
Couple with children	Leaving alone			,07*
	Several persons			,06
	Couple without children			,00
	Lone-parent			,11
	Complex			,06**
R2		.00	.02	.04
F		1.52 n.s.	3.47***	4.23***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

2.5.2. Education

Education is a well-known characteristic in the studies of homophily. To understand whether the similarity of education operates as a mechanism of selection, we analyse the variation of the proportion of low, medium and highly educated alters by the level of education of ego, based on our adaptation of the ISCED classification. For the education of alters, we aggregated the 5 categories into three: low (less than primary); medium (low secondary/compulsory school) and high (upper secondary and higher education).

Figure 24 Average proportion of low, medium, and highly educated alters by the respondents' level of education (N=1487)

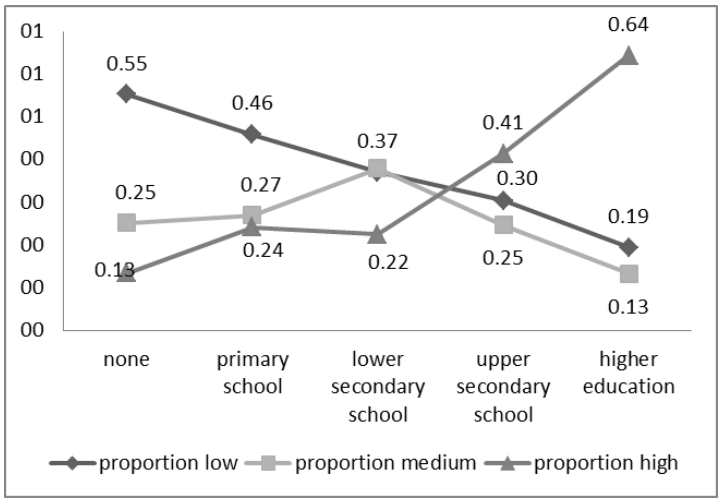


Figure 24 shows the distribution of low, medium and highly educated alters by the level of education of ego. Regarding the *low educated alters*, we can see a decrease trend as the level of education of ego increases. This means that the proportion of low educated alters is higher among low educated egos. For instance, among those who never attended school the proportion is .55 and among those with higher education the proportion is .20. Regarding the proportion of *medium educated alters*, data show that those with the compulsory education show the highest proportion of medium educated alters. Finally, we can see that among those respondents with education levels till the low secondary school there is a low proportion of *highly educated alters*, and instead, there is a strong increase of the proportion of highly educated alters among those with upper secondary school (M=.41) and mainly among those who attended university (M=.64).

We tested the impact of some variables on the proportion of *low* and *highly educated* alters. We excluded the regression model on the *medium educated alters* as no substantial differential effect was detected.

Table 22 Regression model for proportion of alters with low, average and high education (unstandardized coefficients)

		Low education			High education		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	-,11***	-,11***	-,12***	,11***	,11***	,11***
	1970-75	-,08***	-,06***	-,08***	,02	-,02	-,03
Men	Women		,02	,04*		-,04**	-,04*
Industrial worker	Self-employed		-,07***	-,08***		,05*	,05*
	Entrepreneurs/executives		-,19***	-,19***		,24***	,23***

	Routine employees		-,08***	-,08***		,08***	,08***
	Professional/technicians		-,22***	-,23***		,35***	,34***
Partner	No partner			-,06*			,02
Children	No children			-,09**			,08**
Couple with children	Living alone			,03			-,02*
	Several persons			-,09			-,13
	Couple without children			,00			,01
	Lone-parent			-,07			,02
	Complex			,029			-,02
R2		0.02	0.07	0.09	0.02	0.16	0.17
F		17.74***	16.86***	9.74***	17.36***	38.71***	20.34***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

Regarding the low educated alters, the results show that individuals from the middle and younger cohort include a lower proportion of alters with lower level of education than the oldest cohort. Social class also plays a significant role, as individuals pertaining to all other occupational positions have less alters with low levels of education when compared to industrial workers. Finally, biographical variables play a minor but significant role as those with no partner and those without children have less alters with low levels of education. Regarding the proportion of highly educated alters; we find again the major role of cohort, with those from the younger cohort including a higher proportion of highly educated alters when compared to those born in the oldest cohort. Women have a lower proportion of highly educated alters than men. Individuals occupying more skilled occupations (PT and EE) and those who are self-employed have a higher proportion of highly educated alters. Again, biographical factors also play a secondary but significant role as the model decreases its power of explanation when adding biographical variables. In fact, all other predictors maintain their role, but two new effects come into view: those individuals without children have a higher proportion of highly educated alters, whereas those who live alone have a lower proportion of highly educated alters.

In sum, homophily criteria operate at the educational level, with low educated respondents (ego) including a higher proportion of low educated alters; and highly educated respondents (ego) including a higher proportion of highly educated alters. The inclusion of low and highly educated alters is also related with birth-cohort and social class. Regarding gender, we found a cross-sex preference instead of a same-sex preference, thus the "like-me hypothesis" is

rejected. The inclusion of a higher proportion of women and a lower proportion of men is mainly predicted by gender and household composition. For instance, those who live in complex family households have a higher proportion of female members than those who live in couple with children. Looking to the type of tie, this is associated complex families which are composed by the couple and the mother or the mother in-law.

2.6. Duration of the relationship

Individuals can have quite heterogeneous networks as they may include ties that they know for all their life such as parents or very recent acquaintances, such as their own young children. Therefore, the inclusion of ties from different generations, such as grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren; as well as the inclusion of more horizontal relationships, such as collaterals or friends, may produce homogeneity and heterogeneity in personal networks. This is particularly true when we are analysing three age-groups with different types of ties available to include in their networks. Therefore, we decided to create a variable in which we would be able to consider how long ego knows that person, by weighting the age of ego. For instance, a situation of two respondents (Ego A born in 1935-40 and Ego B born in 1970-75) reporting an alter whom they met 15 years ago, means different duration levels of acquaintance for the two respondents: for Ego A this alter shared only 20% of his/her own life; while for Ego B, this alter shared 43% of his/her own life. Thus we constructed a variable of duration of acquaintanceship with 5 categories, which takes the number of years that each alter has existed in the life of ego as a percentage of ego's years of life (%= how long ego knows alter/ego's age).

Looking at table 23, we can see the average proportion and standard deviation associated with each category of acquaintance. Individuals include a higher proportion of old acquaintances and recent acquaintances. The "very old ties" and "very recent" ties are less represented in personal networks.

Table 23 Average proportion of alters with different levels of acquaintance duration (N=1487)

Acquaintance duration	Average proportion	Standard-deviation
Very recent acquaintance (Less than 25% of shared life)	0.15	0.23

Recent acquaintance (Between 26% to 50% of shared life)	0.23	0.27
Old acquaintance (51% to 75% of shared life)	0.36	0.33
Very old acquaintance (More than 75% of shared life)	0.16	0.26
All life (100%)	0.05	0.16

Regarding the impact of some factors on the inclusion of close persons whom ego met at different times of his/her life, *we* aggregated the above described categories in three main categories: *very old acquaintance* (ranging from alters who share the whole life of ego and alters who share more than ¾ of ego's life); *old acquaintance* (ranging from alters who share ½ to ¾ of ego's life); and *very recent acquaintance* (alters who share less than 1/2 of ego's life). We decided to explore the predictors just for the contrasting ties, i.e. we ran the regression model only on the proportion of very old ties and very recent ties.

Table 24 Regression model for the proportion of alters who are considered as very old and recent acquaintance (unstandardized coefficients)

		Very old acquaintance			Very recent acquaintance		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	-,01	-,01	,00	,04***	,04***	,03***
	1970-75	,08***	,08***	,07***	,12***	,12***	,11***
Men	Women		,00	,00		-,01	-,01
Industrial worker	Self-employed		,03**	,03**		-,03*	-,02
	Entrepreneurs/executives		,01	,01		-,01	,00
	Routine employees		,01	,01		-,01	,00
	Professional/technicians		,04***	,02*		-,03*	-,02
Partner	No partner			,03**			-,01
Children	No children			,10***			-,04**
Couple with children	Living alone			-,03*			-,02
	Several persons			,01			-,02

Couple without children			,01			-,04***
Lone-parent			,04			-,09*
Extended			,01			,00
R2	0.09	0.10	0.16	0.10	0.11	0.13
F	69.71***	22.06***	20.54***	82.91***	25.04***	15.92***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

The youngest cohort includes a higher proportion of alters whom they have known for a long time (*very old acquaintances*) than the oldest cohort. Regarding structural factors, social class is also a predictor of the salience of very old acquaintances, as self-employed persons and professionals and technicians include more alters whom they have known for a long time than industrial workers. Finally, all family-biographical factors account for the proportion of very old ties. Those who do not have a partner or do not have children show a higher proportion of alters whom they have known for a very long time. Concerning *very recent acquaintances*, we find again the role of cohort, with the middle and the younger cohort having a higher proportion of alters whom they met very recently than the oldest one. Social class has a significant effect when considered with cohort; however the effect disappears while adding the biographical variables. Those individuals with no children have a low proportion of recent acquaintances, as well as those living in couple without children or in a lone-parent household.

In sum, the presence of very recent and very old acquaintances is mainly related to cohort differences, as the R^2 values associated to both models decrease when we introduced the structural and family-biographical factors.

2.7. Co-residence

Co-residence is a well-known mechanism of interdependencies, which seems to characterize those who belong to personal networks. Nearly 7 out of 10 elements lived with ego in the same household at some point of his or her life, as the proportion of co-resident alters is M=0.7. Again, the history of co-residence over the lifecourse seems to be a major generative mechanism of closeness. The two-way ANOVA shows an interaction effect of sex and cohort

(F=7.15, p=.001). In the oldest and middle cohorts, men show a higher proportion of co-resident members than women, whereas in the younger cohort, this trend reverses. Men in the younger cohort have a lower proportion of co-resident members than women.

Table 25 Regression model for the proportion of co-resident alters (unstandardized coefficients)

Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	,00	,00	-,05*
	1970-75	,01	,02	-,05*
Men	Women		,01	,02
Industrial worker	Self-employed		-,03	-,02
	Entrepreneurs/executives		-,08*	-,07*
	Routine employees		-,03	-,02
	Professional/technicians		-,09**	-,06*
Partner	No partner			-,09***
Children	No children			-,03
Couple with children	Living alone			-,15***
	Several persons			-,08
	Couple without children			-,10***
	Lone-parent			,02
	Complex			,02
R2		0.02	0.16	0.17
F		17.36***	38.71***	20.34***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

Table 25 shows the predictors of the average *proportion co-resident alters*. The proportion of co-resident alters is predicted by cohort, social class, partnership status and household composition. Birth-cohort is only a predictor through the mediation of family-biographical factors, as cohort has no main effect by itself (model 1). However, when biographical variables are introduced in the model, birth-cohort effects become significant. Individuals belonging to the middle and younger cohorts show a lower proportion of co-resident alters than individuals born in the oldest cohort. Also executives and entrepreneurs and professionals and technicians have a lower proportion of co-resident members when compared to industrial workers. Regarding the impact of biographical factors, those with no partner and those who live alone or who are currently living in couple without children

include a lower proportion of co-resident alters. The model improves sharply when we add the structural variables.

2.8. Perception of as family

Nearly all members of the network are perceived as family as more than 90% of the network elements in all cohorts are considered as family and there is no differential effect of cohort and sex. This means that, if the average proportion of kinship ties in the total sample is 86% and the average proportion of alters who are considered as family is 90%, there are some non-kin ties that are being considered as family.

Table 26 Regression model for the proportion of as-family alters (unstandardized coefficients)

Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	-,01	-,02	-,03*
	1970-75	-,03	-,02	-,03*
Men	Women		,01	,01
Industrial worker	Self-employed		-,03	-,03
	Entrepreneurs/executives		-,05*	-,04**
	Routine employees		-,01	-,01
	Professional/technicians		-,05***	-,04**
Partner	No partner			,00
Children	No children			-,03
Couple with children	Living alone			-,07***
	Several persons			-,06
	Couple without children			,01
	Lone-parent			,04
	Extended			,00
R2		.00	.01	.04
F		2.26 n.s.	2.77***	4.38***

*ρ<0.05 ** ρ <0.01 *** ρ <0.001

Cohort has no main effect on the proportion of alters considered as family. Social class is the only structural factor which accounts for the variation of the proportion of as-family alters, with EE's and PT's showing a lower proportion of alters considered as family than industrial workers. With the addition of family-biographical factors, social class remains significant, but cohort also becomes a significant predictor. Those who belong to the middle and younger

cohorts include a lower proportion of alters considered as family. Also those who are currently living alone have a lower proportion of as-family members. Despite the importance of these results, they tell us little regarding the changing meaning of family through the inclusion of non-kin as family and the exclusion of kin as family. Therefore, we decided to give a privileged space to this topic, as the study of the mechanisms underlying the attribution of family meaning is a core issue in this thesis.

Additionally, we would also like to explore: 1) if kin ties, and which ones, remain the core bonds of what individuals perceive as their "family" configuration; 2) understand if non-kin ties, and which ones, are becoming more relevant; 3) capture the main types of configurations of close persons considered as family and the main predictors that shape each type; 4) identify the predictors of considering non-kin as "family" members and the predictors of not considering some relatives as "family", i.e., the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion from the family configuration (Wall and Gouveia, 2014).

3. Discussion

The analysis that has been carried out over this chapter allowed us to explore the key-morphological characteristics of personal networks in Portuguese society, but most of all, it provided relevant information on the main principles which seem to act as criteria for considering others as important persons. Moreover, it also shows how the construction of personal networks does not take place in a social vacuum, but is shaped by mechanisms of social differentiation, operating in lifecourse, structural and family biographical contexts, which in turn are fully intertwined.

If on the one hand, the findings highlight the operation of well-known generative mechanisms of closeness, such as kinship (blood, alliance and filiation), co-residence, duration of the relationship, positive interactions, and homophily; on the other hand, findings also point to the existence of a *flexibility*, *selectivity* and *differentiation* in the building up of relational proximity. Three major findings support the action of these three complementary processes. First, the comparison between the pool of available relatives and the (ex)inclusion of those same ties in personal networks, shows the exercise of individual choice in the selection of whom individuals consider as close, in particularly, among highly normative ties, such as parents and siblings. Second, the analysis of who individuals consider as family show how a family-like meaning can be attributed beyond the limits of kinship, as in the case of friends. Family meaning is tied to the quality of the tie, rather than the formal status. And thirdly, we found variations in the salience of these characteristics according to lifecourse dynamics, social differentiated contexts and family and biographical circumstances. This means that relational choices are contextually constrained as there are segments of society which are more likely to rely on some generative principles of proximity than others.

If we take a look into the key-attributes of personal networks, we find the role of the following underlying principles of closeness: kinship, positive interactions, duration of relationship, homophily criteria, co-residence, and family meaning.

Blood, alliance and filiation principles remain of major importance in the construction of personal networks, with the family of procreation and orientation being predominant. Mothers and female friends are more represented than their male equivalents, but the differences

between female and male elements in each type of tie are not strike and do not allow us to infer a genderification of networks associated to a massive presence of female ties. However, we witness a decrease of kinship salience within some segments of society, in particular in the younger cohort, but also in the networks of individuals who work in more skilled occupations and who are not currently in a conjugality, who are childless and those who live alone. Family-biographical factors are of great importance for kinship variations.

We also found that individuals privileged positive interaction in their close relationships, although these interdependencies, as they also imply energy and investment, can create space for conflict. Thus, we also found both sides in personal relationships. Interestingly, it seems that negative persons are more frequent in horizontal ties, namely those who belong to the conjugal dimension (partner and ex-partner), siblinghood (siblings, siblings' in-law), and non-kin (neighbours and friends). This somehow contradicts the idea of the prevalence of conflict in multigenerational ties, although we do not have enough information (nor so many conflictive networks) to go into detail on this speculation. Actually, "partner" is both most frequently mentioned as a positive person and as a negative person. In order to understand whether there are some predictors for the inclusion of negative alters, we found again that mainly cohort, gender and biographical variables fully account for the proportion of negative persons.

The duration of the relationship measured by the proportion of the life span shared by the alters and ego show the prevalence of ties spanning for more than half of ego's life, with very recent and very old acquaintances being less present. The presence of very old relationships and very recent relationships are mainly related to age (cohort) and it also seems to be related with the type of ties that individuals may include. For instance, in the younger cohort there is a higher proportion of very old acquaintances. This is likely to be related with the inclusion of parents and aunts and uncles, which is more likely to be possible for this cohort than for the others due to demographical reasons. This also reinforces our intention of focusing on the types of ties to better understand personal configurations.

The principle of similarity between ego and the alters was also confirmed as operating at the level of educational status, but not at the level of gender. Actually, there is a cross-sex preference instead of a same-sex preference in men and women's networks. Regarding education, the findings confirmed that those individuals with a higher level of education have

a higher proportion of highly educated alters and vice-versa. So, mechanisms of homophily can also create spaces of social exclusion in personal relationships.

Co-resident is still a mechanism which enhances feelings of closeness, as the average proportion of alters who have shared the same household with ego at some point of his/her life is 7 out of 10. The younger and oldest cohort has a lower proportion of co-resident members we compared to the oldest cohort, which seems to be related with the proportion of non-kin in the younger cohort and the proportion of grandchildren in the middle cohort, two categories of ties which are frequent among these cohorts and usually live in other households. The non-kin proportion among those with skilled occupations may also be associated with the low proportion of co-resident alters among these social professional categories. Those who are childless have also low levels of co-resident elements. Also, individuals who are living alone and in couple with no children, which can be middle adults in empty-nest or young couples, have less co-resident members in their networks.

Finally, the attribution of a family meaning despite the formal status of the tie revealed a certain degree of blurring the family boundaries between kin and non-kin, and stress how the inclusion and exclusion of what individuals perceived "as family" is foremost based on closeness rather than exclusively based on the formal principles of blood and alliance. The idea of suffusion between those with a kinship status and those with an affinity status, mainly friends, founds empirical evidence in this work.

The network-size can unveil the potential webs of social capital and therefore, is important to identify areas of social vulnerability, namely among old adults, in particular, older women, industrial workers and individuals living alone. However, as mentioned elsewhere, it is important not to forget that examining the network size without information on the effective occurrence of exchange (density) can be a tricky measure, as one can have large networks but only a few members actively engaged in support. This issue will be taken up again in the last chapter on social capital.

Overall, this chapter provided a first descriptive portrait of personal networks in Portuguese society, but also contributed for the understanding of the main generative principles of relational proximity and the identification of the processes of selectivity, flexibility and differentiation, interfering on the action of these principles in the construction of personal relationships

Chapter III - Mapping the diversity of personal configurations

1. Introduction

One of the main properties which is decisive for the construction of closeness is the nature of the tie that links the individual to his/her significant others. As we saw in the previous chapter, the existence of a kinship tie is essential for a person to be considered as important person in one's life, but there was also evidence of the integration of other close bonds beyond blood and alliance, such as friends and neighbours. Moreover, findings revealed the inclusion of immediate relatives, such as partner, children and parents, but also distant relatives in a vertical or horizontal line, linked by consanguineous or in-law bonds. We concluded that there is some degree of selectivity and flexibility in the construction of personal networks, yet there are also contextual constraints to these preferences. Therefore, in this chapter we shift our attention from the question of "what are the main types of ties which are represented in personal networks?" towards the issue of "how are these ties combined in specific arrangements?" and which factors impact these preferences.

The configurational perspective emphasizes the importance of mapping the diversity of personal networks in terms of arrangements; and understanding how these different combinations of ties shape the architecture of interdependencies between the members. In this chapter, our aim is to uncover the variety of arrangements combining certain types of ties, and thus to identify a typology of personal configurations. The dynamics and structure of interdependencies within each configuration will be investigated in chapter IV. Again, the different ways of building up personal configurations by focusing on some patterns of combined ties are also influenced by individuals' age and generational background, their structural and normative contexts, their family biographical circumstances and also the availability of people to include. We will look at all these variables.

Four main reasons can be advanced to justify our option of analysing the arrangements based on the combination of ties rather than focusing on other attributes, such as acquaintanceship or co-residence, or even mixing them. First, one of the core research issues of this dissertation is to explore the meaning of family ties within personal relationships by examining how the diversity of modes of (re)constructing close relationships implies the inclusion of specific types of ties and the exclusion of others. Second, the theoretical developments and the empirical work which have been dealing with change in personal relationships in late

modernity – whether referring to the failure of the nuclear model, or the decline of kinship ties, or the suffusion between relatives and friends - focus on the nature of the ties. Thirdly, the studies drawing on the configurational approach focus first and foremost on the type of ties, and they have been testing their analytical strategy and models nationally and across countries. Thus we aim to apply the same methodology in our sample and identify some commonalities and dissimilarities with previous empirical findings. Fourthly, in the previous chapter we found that the influence of other indicators such as acquaintanceship duration or homophily mechanisms was closely associated with the type of tie. Thus, analysing the configurations based on the type of ties will enable us to infer the role of other principles, such as age, acquaintanceship duration, or the sex of alters.

The analysis will be developed in three main steps:

- The identification of the main types of personal configurations based on the combination of ties in the total sample;

- The investigation of the role of shaping factors operating at several levels, such as cohort, structural, normative, family-biographical, and subjective factors, on the different types of configuration.

- An intra-cohort analysis of the main types of personal configurations in order to isolate age-period-cohort effects.

2. Identifying a typology of personal configurations (total sample)

The main findings in the previous chapter showed that the elements of the family of procreation, such as partner and children, are the most frequently cited ties, as they are reported by nearly 75% of the respondents. A little bit less frequently cited, but still with a significant percentage, we found elements of the family of origin, such as the mother (24%), the father (22%) and the siblings (22%). Finally, friends are the non-kin tie most frequently mentioned (22%). Within residual percentages, we found members of the extended family (grandchildren, in-laws, collaterals and spiritual kin) and also some non-kin ties, such as neighbours and co-workers.

Inspired by the methodology used by Widmer (2010) in his empirical studies on family configurations, we adopted a three-step strategy in order to identify the main configurations of personal relationships (Widmer, 2006).

First, based on the initial coding list of 40 terms, we looked at the distribution of the categories reported by the respondents to identify the most frequently reported ties, retaining those categories reported by at least 3% of the respondents. All other ties which were less frequently mentioned (<3%) were aggregated in two categories of meaning: "other kin" (grandparents, step-family and fictive kin) and "other non-kin" (acquaintances, ex-partner, domestic employees…).

In a second step, the 40 categories of tie were submitted to a factor analysis, using the Principal Component's method of extraction and VariMax rotation. We performed this procedure in order to identify the suitability of some of our categories of meaning and to assess the need to aggregate other categories. Based on the final factor analysis solution, we aggregated other categories of ties (for instance, daughter and son were joined together in the category "children", as both terms were highly correlated to one factor), as the reduction of non-discriminant variables will improve the robustness of the clustering model. With this procedure, we ended up with the following 17 categories: children, partner, mother, friends, siblings, father, grandchildren, children in-law, sibling in-law, neighbours, mother in-law, other non-kin, collaterals, work colleagues, other kin, nephew, and father in-law. Table 27 shows the percentage of respondents citing each type of tie.

Table 27 Percentage of respondents citing each type of tie (N=1487)

Type of tie	Percentage of respondents citing the tie
Children	73.6
Partner	71.3
Mother	23.9
Friends	22.1
Siblings	21.3
Father	16.3
Grandchildren	15.5
Children in-law	9.3
Siblings in-law	6.5
Neighbours	5.6
Mother in-law	5.4
Other non-kin (domestic employees, acquaintances,)	4.4

Collaterals (uncles, cousins)	3.9
Work colleagues (co-workers and boss)	3.8
Other kin (spiritual, stepfamily, grandparents)	3.6
Nephews	3.5
Father in-law	3.1

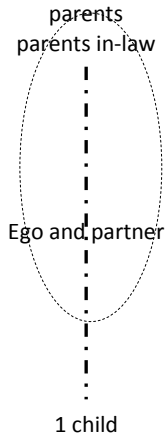
Finally, we introduced the average number of alters cited in each category into a Hierarchical Clustering Analysis based on a measure of Euclidian distances between individuals, and on the Ward Clustering algorithm. We examined 2 to 10 clusters and we found the solution of seven clusters to be the more enlightening of the differentiation and the one which provides a satisfactory balance between interpretability and statistical efficiency (Everett, 1993; Widmer, 2006). To understand the clusters' composition, we ran a set of variance analysis procedures (one-way ANOVA), by considering the mean differences of average number of alters cited in each category of tie by cluster. We then performed *post-hoc* tests associated with each analysis in order to identify which clusters are different.

Table 28 Average number of alters cited in each tie by cluster

	Extended conjugal	**Nuclear closed**	**Friendship-up**	**Siblings-oriented**	**Beanpole-down**	**Nuclear open**	**Adult children**	**Total**
	39.9%	27.4%	9.1%	8.9%	5.8%	5.2%	3.7%	100%
	(594)	(408)	(135)	(132)	(86)	(77)	(55)	(1487)
Mothers	.30	.11	.39	.40	.07	.29	.04	.24
Fathers	.23	.06	.27	.27	.01	.16	.02	.16
Children	.71	2.16	.19	1.30	2.48	2.40	5.49	1.48
Children in-law	.08	.13	.01	.02	.70	.31	.09	.13
Fathers in-law	.06	.01	0.00	.03	0.00	.03	0.00	.03
Mothers in-law	.10	.01	.03	.05	0.00	.05	.02	.05
Siblings	.21	.07	.32	2.12	.20	.14	.05	.34
Friends	.11	.04	1.90	.30	.20	2.88	0.00	.42
Neighbours	.11	.06	.01	.05	.05	.05	.05	.07
Partner	.80	.80	.48	.76	.74	.90	.71	.71
Grandchidren	.20	.07	.01	.12	3.40	.14	.35	.33
Siblings in-law	.08	.08	.06	.17	.06	.01	.04	.07
Collaterals	.03	.03	.06	.27	0.00	.03	.04	.05
Other kin	.07	.01	.08	.05	.05	.01	0.00	.04
Coworkers	.09	0.00	.06	.11	.08	.03	0.00	.06
Other nonkin	.07	.01	.07	.09	.07	.01	.05	.05
Nephews and nieces	.03	.01	.04	.39	.02	0.00	.04	.06

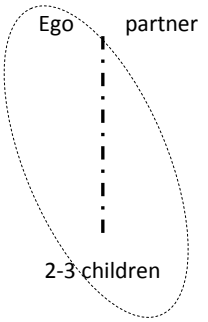
The modal cluster (40%), cluster 1, is composed of those respondents who mainly reported the partner (M=0.80), parents (M_{mother}= 0.30 and M_{father}=0.23) and parents in-law ($M_{mother\ in\text{-}law}$= 0.06 and $M_{father\ in\text{-}law}$=0.10). They can also include children (M=0.71), but to a lesser extent, as these individuals are predominantly childless or with one child. This predominance of the couple and the ascending alliance members, i.e., the focus on ties created by the conjugal bond, led us to name this configuration as *extended conjugal*. The conjugal unit is the main anchor for this configuration. It seems to reflect some degree of conjugalisation of family life but is also extended to parents on both sides. The closure of this configuration around the couple and respective parents is associated with an early phase of family formation, such as the transition to conjugal life or becoming a parent. Thus, the apparent conjugalisation seems to be a transition from the family of origin to the family of procreation.

Figure 25 Focus and genealogical orientation of the *conjugal-open* configuration

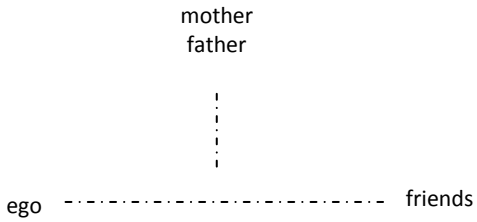


The second cluster is composed of those respondents whose networks are focused on partner (M=0.80) and children (M=2.16). In fact, this configuration, which we defined as *nuclear closed*, represents nearly 27% of the sample. The core of this arrangement is the family of procreation with no space for the inclusion of more distant kin or friends. Actually, we found two versions inside this cluster: those who actually cited partner and 2 to 3 children; and those who cited children in the absence of the partner, forming a lone parent nucleus. This seems to reflect some contraction of family structure around the nuclear unit, be it couple with children or lone parent.

Figure 26 Focus and genealogical orientation of the *nuclear-closed* configuration

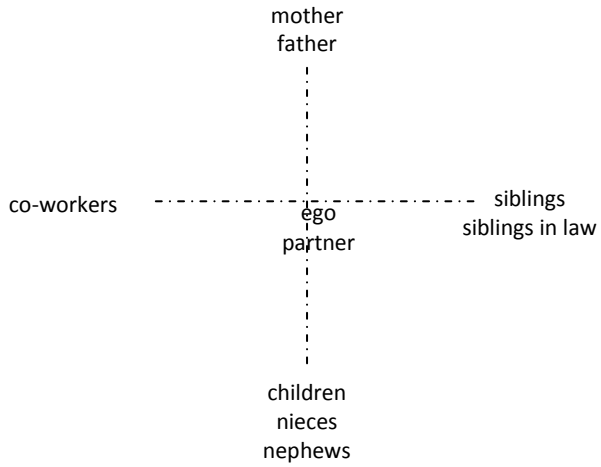


The third cluster (9.1 %) has a mixed nature. It is composed mainly of non-kin ties, with friends (1.90) and other non-kin (M=0.07) being of particular importance, but also by the father (M=0.27) and the mother (M=0.39). Alliance and in-laws are almost absent in this configuration. This salience of both friendship ties and of the family of orientation drove us to call it the *friendship-up* configuration. This seems to reflect the openness of the boundaries to non-kin ties, which introduces some heterogeneity into this configuration. The family orientation is still a reference structure of the configuration as the addition of friends does not imply the demise of their role.



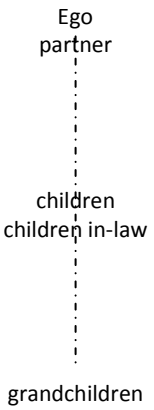
Cluster 4 is mainly structured following a horizontal orientation (8.9%). Respondents in this cluster included siblings (M=2.12) and all the collaterals that come with these ties, such as siblings' in-law (M=0.17), nephews and nieces, uncles and aunts and cousins ($M_{collaterals}$=0.27). Partners and children are also present (76% of individuals in this configuration mentioned the partner and 72% mentioned children). Parents can also be included, in particular mothers (M=0.40), as well as co-workers and other non kin ($M_{co\text{-}workers}$=0.11 and $M_{other\ non\text{-}kin}$=0.09). Due to the embeddedness of this arrangement in sibling ties, we called this cluster the *sibling oriented* configuration (9%), yet the presence of parents introduced some degree of verticality to this configuration. Thus, rather than horizontal, this configuration assumes the shape of a cross, as parents and children form a vertical line, and siblings and co-workers form a horizontal line, in the same proportion.

Figure 27 Focus and genealogical orientation of the *siblings-oriented* configuration



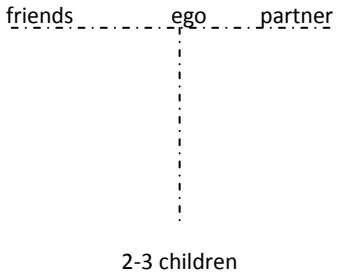
Contrary to the previous configuration which was horizontally and vertically oriented, cluster 5 focuses on kinship members of different generations: the partner (M=0.74), children (M=2.48), children in-law (M=0.70), and grandchildren (M=3.40). This *beanpole-down* configuration (5.9%) is vertically structured and it has few members in each of the three generations. Yet, this vertical orientation moves in a descending line, in the sense that ego and partner are in fact the first generational level. This descending orientation drove us to label this cluster as *beanpole-down*. Here, the respondent (ego) is in the position of grandparent, so the configuration has a downward orientation towards children and grandchildren. This configuration is an accumulation of nucleuses.

Figure 28 Focus and genealogical orientation of the *beanpole-down* configuration



The sixth cluster is the *nuclear open* and represents 5.2% of the sample. This cluster is represented by those respondents who establish a strong relationship with the members of the family of procreation, citing the partner (M=0.90) and children (M=2.40). However, contrary to the *nuclear-closed*, this configuration is open to friends (M=2.88). By contrast with the *nuclear-closed* configuration, this is a more inclusive way of building up significant ties around the nuclear family unit.

Figure 29 Focus and genealogical orientation of the *nuclear-open* configuration



Finally, the last cluster, *adult children* (4%), is composed of individuals who mainly cited their adult children and always 5 or more children (M=5.49). Three out of ten individuals belonging to this configuration are widowed, but the majority still have a partner. In fact, the partner is also cited (M=0.71), but not with the same intensity as in other clusters. Despite the child orientation of this configuration, the amount of adult children (>5) is a unique characteristic, which distinguishes it from the *nuclear open* and *nuclear closed*. Table 29 presents the main properties of the clusters.

Figure 30 focus and genealogical orientation of the adult-children configuration

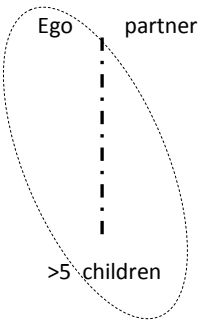


Table 29 Summary of the morphological aspects of personal configurations according to the types of tie (N=1487)

	Extended Conjugal	Nuclear-closed	Friendship-up	Siblings-oriented	Beanpole -down	Nuclear open	Adult Children
Percentage	39.9%	27.4%	9.1%	8.9%	5.8%	5.2%	3.7%
Frequency	(594)	(408)	(135)	(132)	(86)	(77)	(55)
Focus	Couple and their ascendants	Family of procreation	Friends and parents	Siblings and collaterals	Multi-generational family	Family of procreation and friends	Several adult children
Orientation	Vertical up	Vertical down	Both horizontal and vertical	Both horizontal and vertical	Vertical down	Both horizontal and vertical	Vertical down
Level of openness to non-kin	Average	None	High	Average	Average	High	None
Type of non-kin	co-workers; neighbours other non-kin	-	Friends, other non-kin	Co-workers	Co-workers, other non-kin	Friends	-

In sum, seven major types of configurations were identified through the combination of the different types of ties. The modal cluster is the *extended-conjugal* with the focus on the couple, parents and parents in-law. The orientation is vertical, though it presents a kind of tree shape with the ascendants from both sides as the branches. The second major cluster is the *nuclear-closed* as it is restricted to the members of the family of procreation with no space for ties outside the nuclear structure. It can also assumes a lone-parent arrangement. Two major hybrid configurations were also found: *friendship-up* is focused on friends but also on parents; and *nuclear-open* is focused on the family of procreation but, in contrast with the nuclear-closed, it is open to friends. Contrary to the previous configurations, *siblings-oriented* is essentially horizontal as it is mainly composed of siblings and siblings in-law, as well as their offspring. Finally, with a vertical descending orientation, we found a *beanpole-down* configuration characterized by a multigenerational composition and with an average openness to co-workers and other non-kin; and an *adult-children* configuration, which is mainly composed of a large number of adult children and quite restricted to the family of procreation.

It can also be totally child-centred, in the absence of the partner. Next, we will try to understand the mechanisms underlying these different ways of building up personal networks.

3. Shaping factors of personal configurations

Personal configurations may be shaped by a variety of factors related to individual's age and generational time, structural conditions, family and biographical circumstances, normative guidelines and subjective investments in several life domains. In this section, we aim to understand whether there are particular social profiles associated with specific types of configurations by looking at the distribution of configurations according to birth-cohort, sex, education, socio-professional group, geographic area of residence, type of household, marital status, partnership status, parenting status, and also by examining the linkages between configurations and individuals' domains of investment or life foci[4]. Table 30 shows the variables and the different levels of categories.

Table 30 Description of shaping factors

Variable	Levels
Birth-cohort	1935-1940
	1950-1955
	1970-1975
Gender	Male
	Female
Education	None
	Primary
	Lower secondary
	Upper secondary
	Higher education
Social class	Industrial and agriculture workers
	Self-employed
	Routine workers
	Executives and entrepreneurs
	Professionals and technicians
Regional profile	Conjugalisation
	Growing individualisation
	Reinforcement of individualisation
	Isolation and informalisation
	Stability, isolation and aging
Marital status	Single
	Married
	Divorced
	Widowed

[4] The association with attitudinal indexes will be analysed in the section of normative interdependences in the chapter IV.

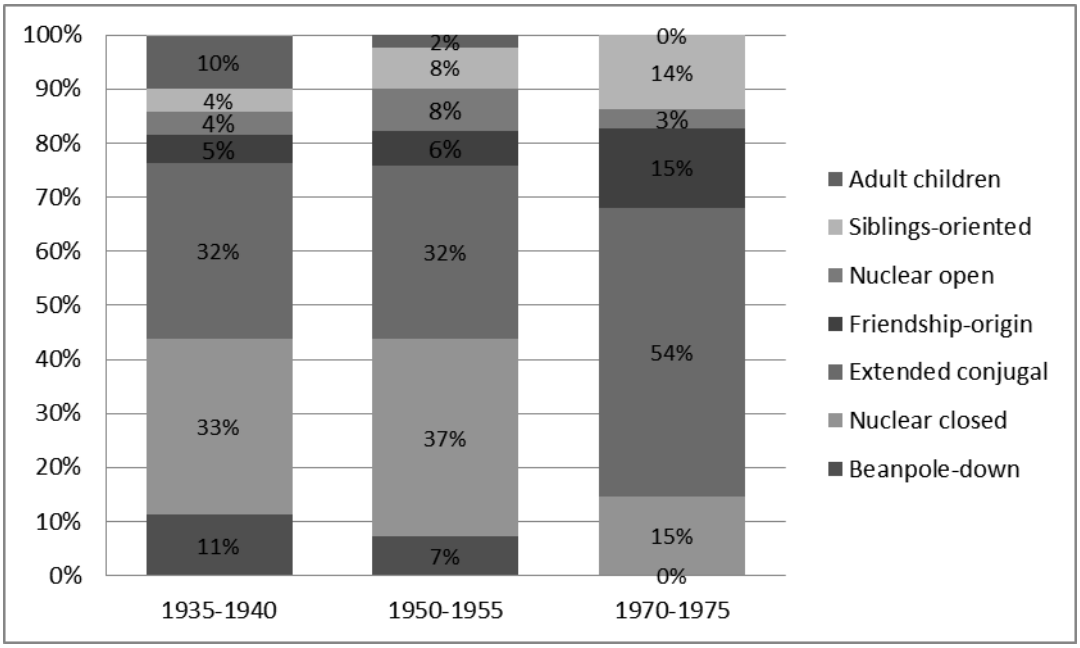
Partnership status	Co-resident partner
	No co-resident partner
Parental status	Children
	No children
Number of children	Childless
	1 child
	2 children
	More than 3 children
Household	Living alone
	Several persons
	Couple without children
	Couple with children
	Lone parent
	Complex
Life foci	Family life
	Education and leisure
	Home and kin
	Social orientation
	Work

To explore the impact of each factor on the type of configuration we will adapt a two-step strategy: the analysis of the co-variation between the type of configuration and each factor, based on the chi-squared distribution and the residuals' analysis; and an integrated reading of the effect of the several factors as predictors of the type of configuration, based on a regression model.

3.1. Birth-cohort

We will now examine the effects of the birth-cohort by running a *chi-square analysis* (χ^2) and giving special attention to the analysis of the *standardized residuals* (se_i). The first measure tells us about the distribution of the categories in the sample and the significance of the association between the two variables; whereas the residuals' measures enable us to estimate the difference between the frequencies expected and the frequencies observed; and in case of significant differences, this will indicate the over or under-representations of some categories. We will follow the same strategy for each factor.

Figure 31 Distribution of the clusters by birth-cohort (N=1487)



If we look at the distribution of the configurations across the three birth-cohorts, we find some interesting trends, which reveal the co-variation of these two variables ($\chi^2_{(12,1)}$=275.46; ρ<.000). Individuals from the oldest cohort are mainly embedded in *nuclear-closed* (33%) and *extended-conjugal* (32%) configurations, as we would expect due to the predominance of these two clusters in the total sample. Also with significant proportions, we find individuals in *beanpole-down* (11%) and *adult-children* (10%) configurations. Actually, the analysis of the residuals (those with an absolute value over 1.96) indicates that *adult-children*, *nuclear-closed* and *beanpole-down* are overrepresented in this cohort as would be expected in the case of a random distribution. In the middle cohort, findings reveal the same dominance of the *nuclear-closed* and of the *extended-conjugal*, followed by *siblings-oriented* (8%) and *nuclear-open* (8%). Again, the residuals' analysis indicates that the *nuclear-closed, nuclear-open* and *beanpole-down* configurations are quite significant in this cohort. Finally, in the younger cohort, half of the individuals present an *extended-conjugal* configuration (54%). The other half is largely distributed over *friendship-up* (15%), *siblings-oriented* (14%) and *nuclear-closed* (15%) configurations. The difference between the observed and the expected frequencies reveals that *extended-conjugal, friendship-up* and *siblings-oriented* configurations are overrepresented in this cohort.

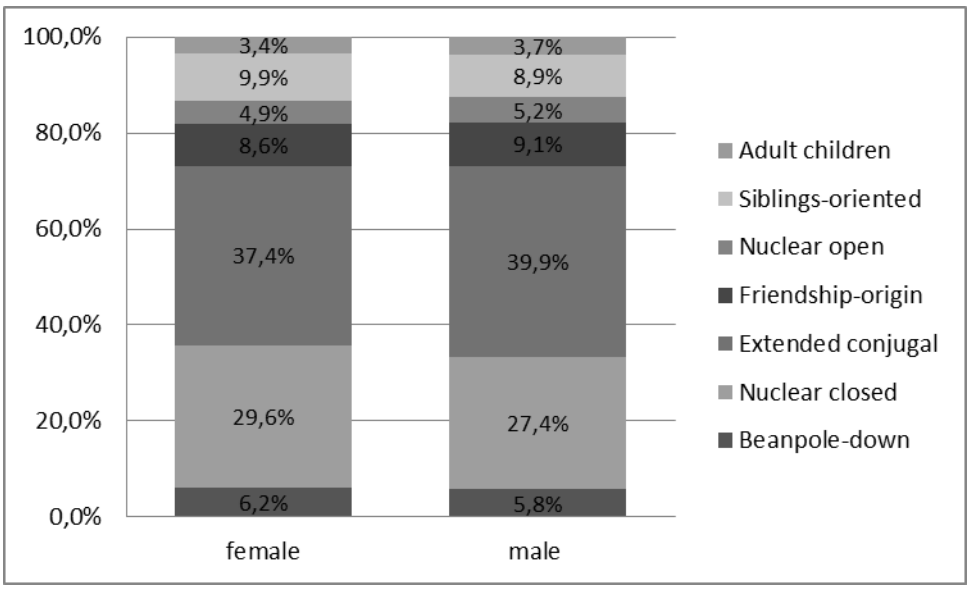
In sum, those who were born in 1935-40 are more likely to build up a beanpole-down, nuclear-closed and adult-children; those who were born in the middle cohort are more likely

to develop *beanpole-down*, *nuclear-closed* and *nuclear-open*; and finally, the younger cohort of those born in 1970-75 are more likely to be embedded in *extended-conjugal*, *friendship-up* and *siblings-oriented*.

3.2. Sex

Literature on the gender preferences and patterns of sociability shows that, in general, women are more oriented towards family ties and neighbours, and more engaged in social activities with distant kin; whereas men are more confined to the nuclear family, but at the same time, more open to non-kin, such as friends and co-workers. Moreover, in heterosexual couples, the sociability outside kin in the couple is often gender segregated (Bott, 1976; Aboim et al, 2008). We also saw in the previous chapter the cross-sex preference of men and women. Thus, sex is a key-variable to understand personal networks. Following the same procedure, we ran a chi-squared analysis, which revealed no significant association between the two variables ($\chi^2_{(6,1)}$=12.04; ρ=n.s.). However, it is worthwhile looking at the sample distribution.

Figure 32 Distribution of type of personal configuration by sex

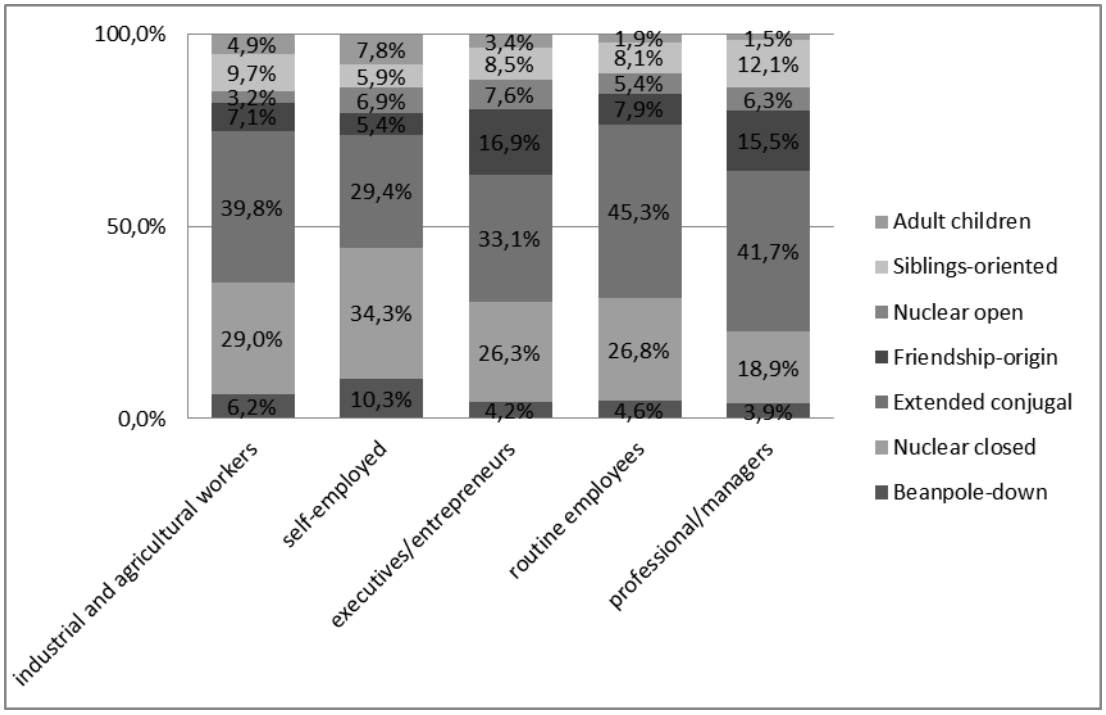


In both cases, men and women are more frequently embedded in *extended-conjugal* and *nuclear-closed* configurations. Actually, differences between men's and women's configurations, even if minor (and not statically significant), are more easily identified through the distribution of the less frequent configurations. Men are slightly more oriented towards *adult-children*, *nuclear-open* and *friendship-up;* whereas *siblings-oriented*, *nuclear-closed* and *beanpole-down* are more common among women.

3.3. Socio-occupational position

Social class has been studied as a line of differentiation in individuals' sociability over the lifecourse, in particular, the openness to relationships outside of the family realm. Findings show that the *socio-professional* position strongly shapes individuals' configurations ($\chi^2_{(24,1)}$=83.92; ρ<.000). Though, a warning should be made, as some professional groups are intimately associated with birth-cohort and, therefore, the variations are strongly linked to an interaction effect of cohort and socio-professional position.

Figure 33 Distribution of type of personal configuration by socio-professional position



Industrial workers are mainly embedded in the modal categories of *nuclear-closed* (29%) and *extended-conjugal* (40%) configurations, but *siblings-oriented* is also very frequent (10%). Self-employed are mainly integrated in *nuclear-closed* (34%), extended-conjugal (25%) and *beanpole-down* (10%) configurations. Regarding the entrepreneurs and executives, we find that the most frequent configuration is the extended-conjugal (33%) and nuclear-closed (26%), but we also find a high percentage in *friendship-up* (17%). As with lower values, we find *nuclear-open* (8%) and *sibling-oriented* (8%). *Routine employees* are strongly embedded in *extended-conjugal* configurations, with half of the sample showing a *nuclear-closed* configuration. Finally, the group of professionals and technicians are massively present in

extended-conjugal, but also in *friendship-up* (16%) and *sibling-oriented* (12%). To summarize, the analysis of the standardized residuals (se_i) reveal that among:

- *Industrial workers*, adult-children configuration (se_i=1.4) is over-represented, whereas friendship-up (se_i=-1.4) and nuclear-open (-1.9) are underrepresented.

- *Self-employed*, adult-children (se_i=3.0), beanpole-down (se_i=2.7) and nuclear-closed (se_i=1.9) are overrepresented, whereas extended-conjugal (se_i=-2.4) and friendship-up (se_i=-1.8) and sibling-oriented (se_i=-1.4) are underrepresented.

- *Entrepreneurs and executives*, friendship-up (se_i=2.8) and nuclear-open (se_i=1.1) are over-represented, whereas extended-conjugal (se_i=-1.2) is underrepresented.

- *Routine employees*, is overrepresented, whereas beanpole (se_i=-1.1), extended-conjugal (se_i=1.9) and adult-children (se_i=-2.1) are underrepresented

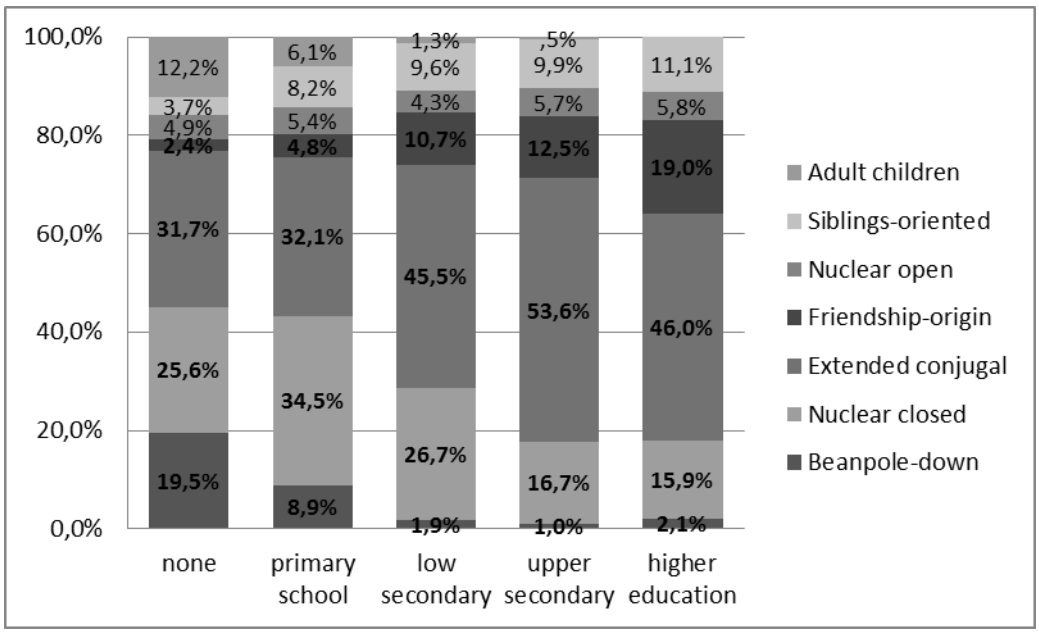
- *Professionals and technicians*, friendship (se_i=3.1) and siblings-oriented (se_i=1.6) are over-represented, whereas nuclear-closed (se_i=-2.3) and adult-children (se_i=-1.7) are underrepresented

In short, in terms of general trends, we can say that openness and selectivity seem to be strongly linked to higher social-professional positions. However, it is important not to forget that these positions are entangled with cohort. For instance, industrial workers are massively represented in the oldest cohort, therefore the over-representation of *adult-children* configuration is linked to this intertwined of cohort and social class (the "Russian dolls model").

3.4. Education

To complete the previous reading of the variations of personal configurations across the different occupational groups, we also decided to explore the role of education. Again, as in the case of social class, the levels of education are highly correlated with cohorts. In fact, personal configurations vary with individuals' level of education ($\chi^2_{(24,1)}$=202.89; ρ<.000).

Figure 34 Distribution of type of personal configuration by level of education (ISCED)



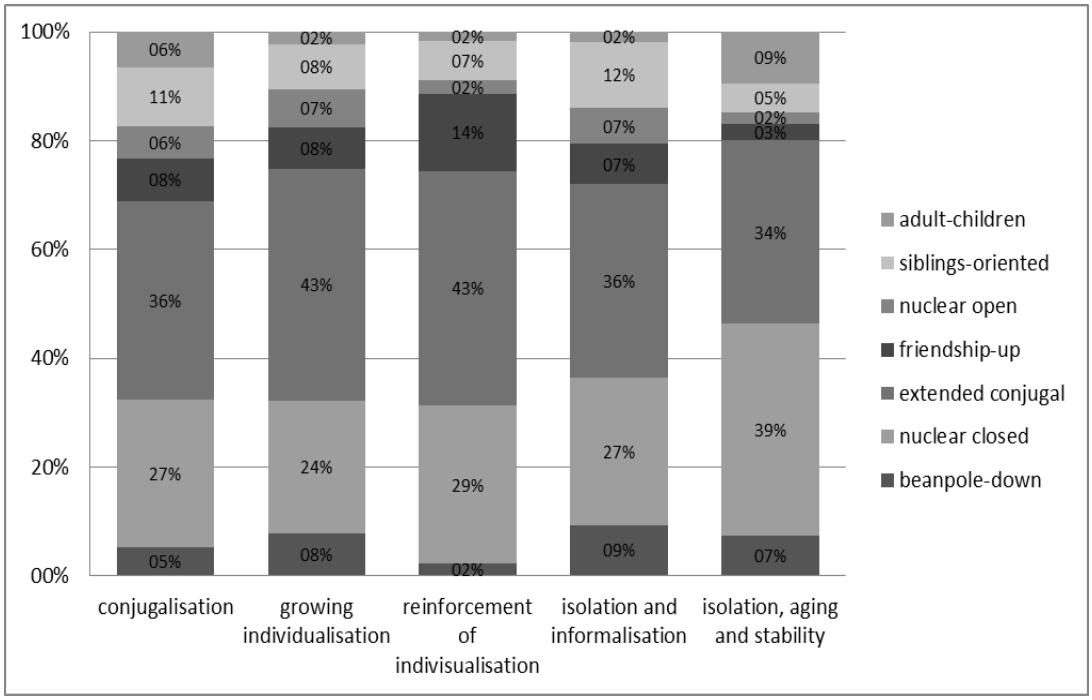
Despite the modal categories, those who did not attend school are strongly embedded in beanpole-down (20%) and adult-children (12%) configurations. Among those with the primary school level, we found again the overrepresentation of beanpole-down (9%) and adult-children (6%), but also of nuclear-closed configuration (35%). Individuals who studied till the upper secondary school are mainly in conjugal (54%) and friendship (12.5%) configurations. Finally, those who went to university and thus with higher levels of education are mostly integrated in extended-conjugal (46%) and friendship-up (19%)

3.5. Regional profiles

As we said while characterizing the three birth-cohorts, the geographical landscape of Portuguese society is hardly captured by dichotomical categories opposing urban/rural or coast/interior, thus we decided to use a typology which aggregates geographic regions according to their demographical profiles. The demographical behaviour of the geographic area where individuals are currently residing is likely to influence the way they build their networks of personal relationships. Therefore, we decided to examine the distribution of personal configurations by geographical profile and we found a significant association between the two variables ($\chi^2_{(24,1)}$=85.00; ρ<.000).

We should highlight the entangling of birth-cohort and structural variables, as the structural variables strongly marked the distinctiveness of each cohort, and thus, the effects of structural variables on personal configurations are mediated by cohort.

Figure 35 Distribution of type of personal configuration by regional profile



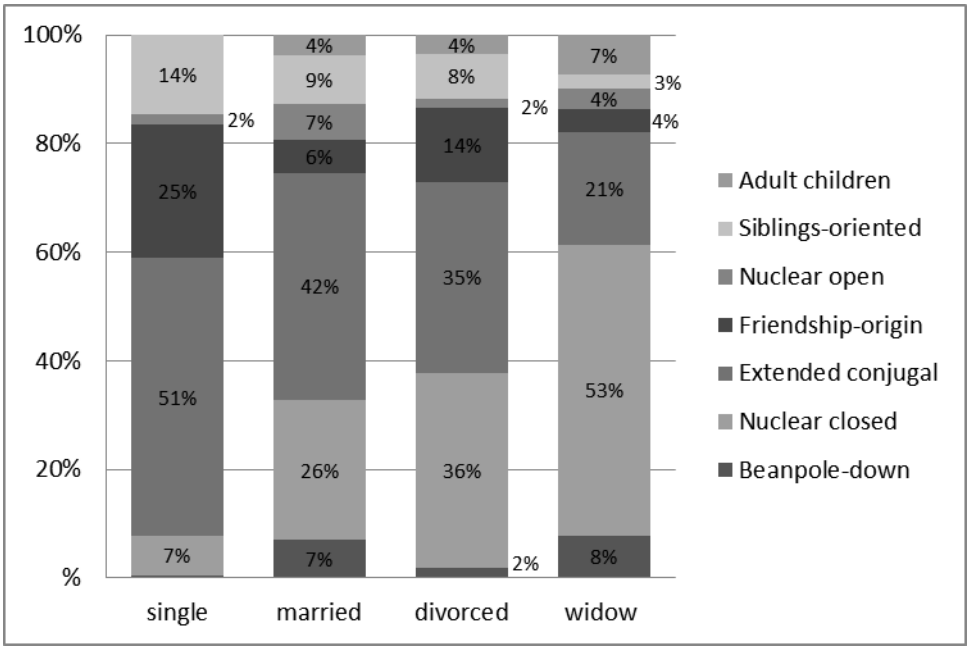
Individuals in all areas are mainly distributed in the modal categories of extended-conjugal and nuclear-closed configurations, thus we will focus on the over and under-representations. Among areas of conjugalisation, there is an overrepresentation of adult-children (2.9) and sibling-oriented (1.3) and an under-representation of extended conjugal (-1.1). Regarding those who live in areas of growing individualisation trends, we found more individuals in beanpole-configurations (1.9) and nuclear-open (1.6) than would be expected; and instead, we found few individuals in nuclear-closed (-1.3) and adult-children (-1.7). Within the category of reinforcement of individualisation trends, individuals are more integrated in friendship-up (3.3); while also showing an underrepresentation of beanpole-down (-2.9), nuclear-open (-2.3) and adult-children (-2.1). Finally, among those in isolation and informalisation areas there is an overrepresentation of beanpole-down (1.5) and sibling-oriented (1.1), and instead, an underrepresentation of adult-children. Finally, in areas of isolation, stability and aging there is

are more individuals building up adult-children (2.9) and nuclear-closed configuration (2.1) than would be expected and less individuals in friendship-up (-1.9).

3.6. Marital status and partnership status

The difference between configurations may be linked to the basic facts of marriage, divorce, widowhood or celibacy. Thus, even if marital status does not inform us on the real status in conjugality, it is worthwhile it to complement that information with the formal status. Indeed, we found a significant co-variation between the type of configuration and marital status ($\chi^2_{(18,1)}$=238.11; ρ<.000)

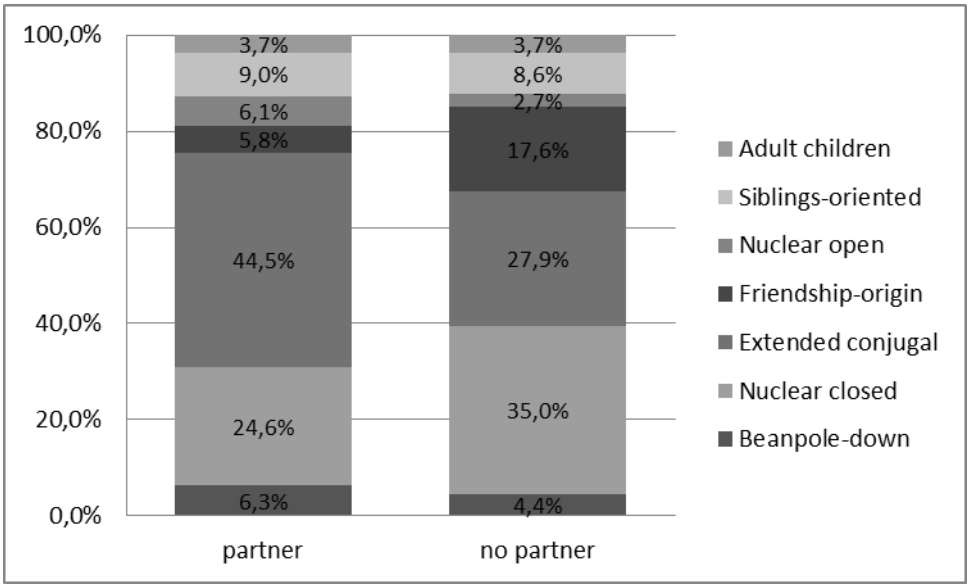
Figure 36 Distribution of type of personal configuration by marital status



Individuals who are single are over-represented in *extended-conjugal* configurations (51%), but also in *friendship-up* (25%) and *sibling-oriented* (14%) configurations. Married individuals are mainly embedded in *extended-conjugal* (42%) and *nuclear-closed* (26%), but in terms of what was expected in a random distribution, they are over-represented in nuclear-open and *beanpole-down* and underrepresented in *friendship-up.* Divorced individuals are mainly embedded in the modal configurations, but the residuals analysis tells us that *friendship-up, nuclear-closed are overrepresented* among them. Finally, widowed respondents are more likely to build up a *beanpole-down (8%), nuclear-closed* (53%) or *adult-children* (7%) types of configuration. If we look at the current state in conjugality, we

find the over and under-representation of some configurations among those living with a partner and not living with a partner ($\chi^2_{(6,1)}$=86.20; ρ<.000).

Figure 37 Distribution of type of personal configuration by current partnership status

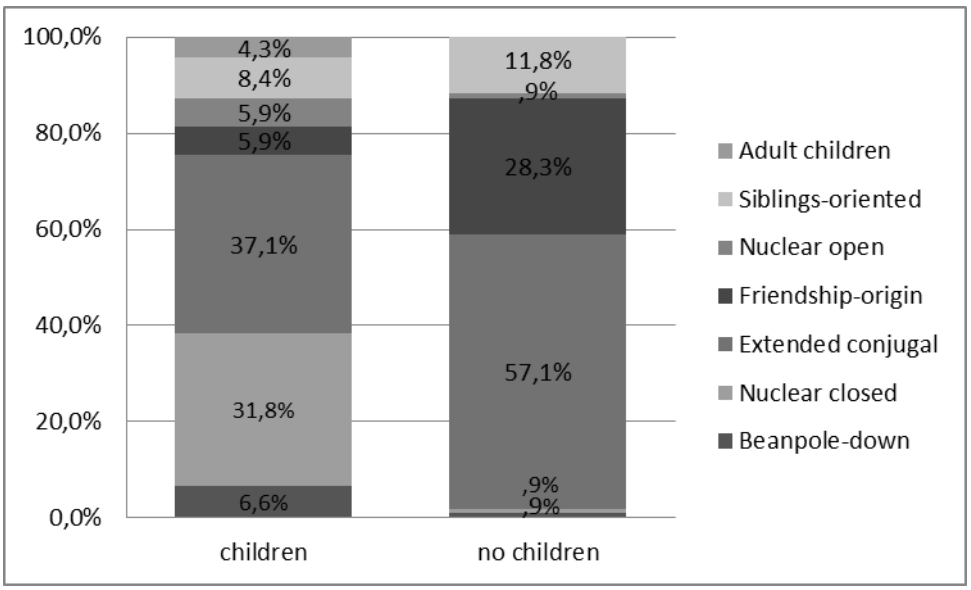


Those who are living in conjugality are more likely to have an *extended-conjugal* (45%), a *nuclear-open* (6%), a *sibling-oriented* (9%) and a *beanpole-down* (6%); whereas those who are not partnered are more likely to construct a nuclear-closed configuration (35%), a friendship-up (18%) and adult-children (4%).

3.7. Parental status and number of children

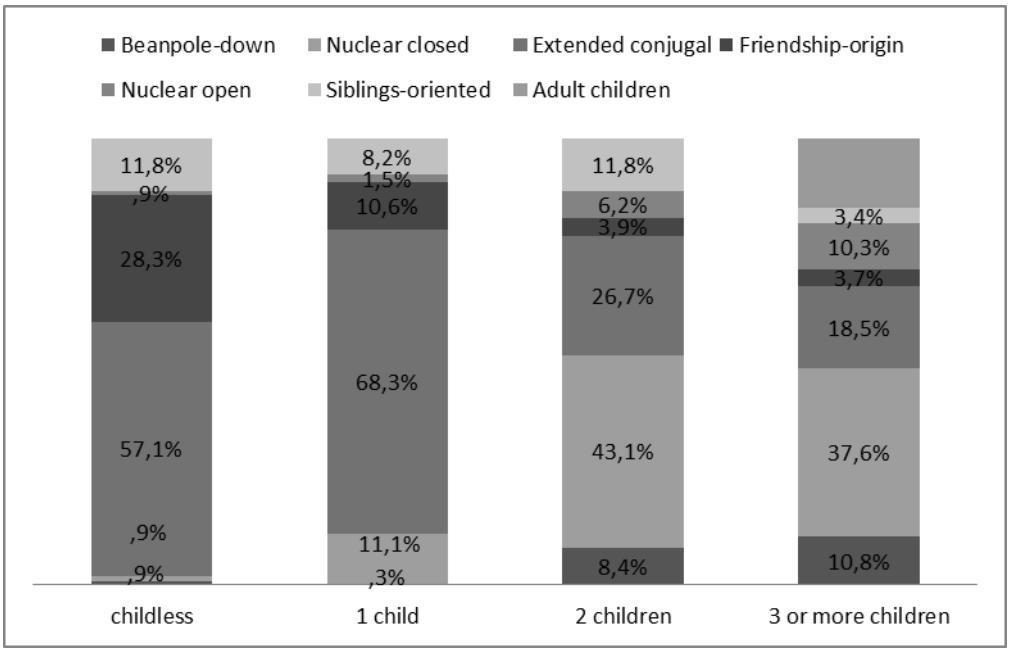
Parental status, i.e. the fact of having children or being childless is strongly associated with the type of configuration ($\chi^2_{(6,1)}$=212.15; ρ<.000), but also the number of children.

Figure 38 Distribution of type of personal configuration by parental status



Those who have children are more likely to have a nuclear-closed configuration (32%), a *nuclear-open* (6%), a *beanpole-down* (7%) and adult-children (4%); whereas those who do not have children are more likely to construct an *extended-conjugal* (57%), a *friendship-up* (28%) and a *sibling-oriented* (12%)

Figure 39 Distribution of type of personal configuration by number of children



3.8. Household composition

Along with the number of children and other relatives who are still alive, configurations may differ on the basis of constraints related to family household structure, in particular the number and kinship status of the co-resident members (Widmer, 2010). People who share the same household develop strong bonds with each other but they may also engage in conflictual relationships. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the link between the composition of the current household and the configuration of personal relationships. There are also epistemological and methodological reasons for this analysis, in the sense that we can compare whether results based on the composition of the household are similar to the results obtained through this ego-centred technique, in which we allow individuals to map their relational setting based on rules of closeness rather than relying on institutional criteria. What is the association between the current household composition and the composition of personal configurations? Is it a full replication?

Figure 40 Distribution of type of household by the type of configuration

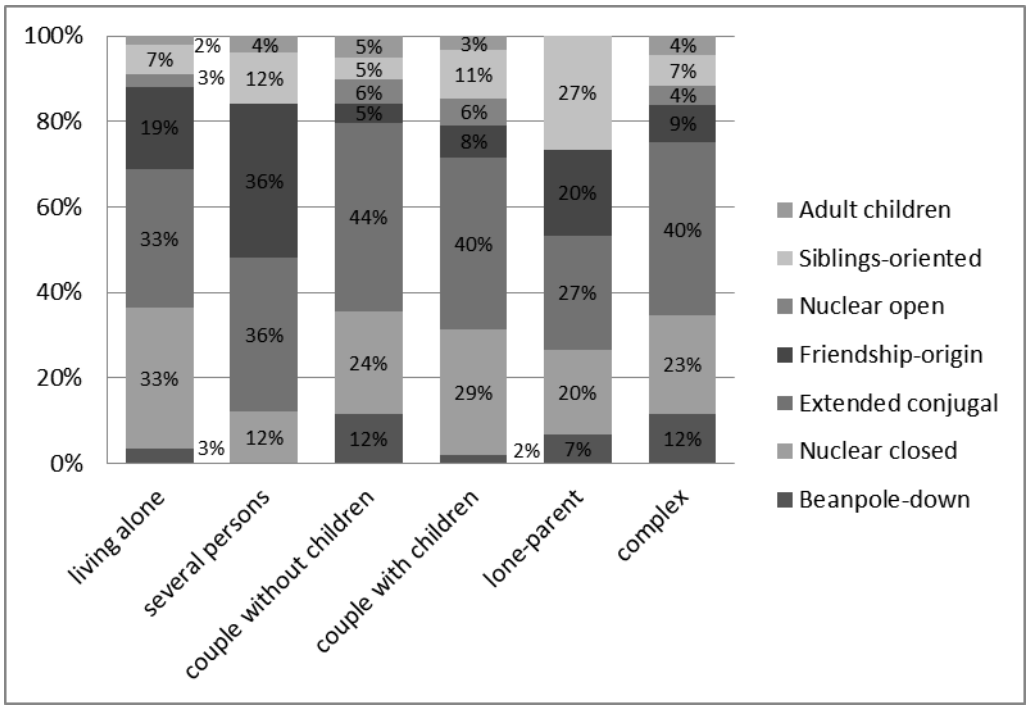


Figure 40 shows the distribution of the types of configuration by the type of household in which the respondents were living at the moment of the interview ($\chi^2_{(30,1)}$=149.51; ρ<.000). Among those who were living alone, nearly 33% show a *nuclear-closed* configuration. But

the more striking percentage is associated with the *friendship-up* configuration, as 19% of those who live in a single-person household show this type of arrangement. *Siblings-oriented* is also quite expressive among this group (6%). For those who live with several persons, the friendship-up configuration assumes a major representativeness, since 36% of these respondents are embedded in the *friendship-up* configuration. This seems to indicate that sharing a household with colleagues and friends on a daily basis may also create strong bonds of affection. However, not only friends, but also parents are present in this configuration, which means again that closeness expands well beyond the household. Also among this group, we observe a significant percentage of respondents showing a *siblings-oriented* configuration (12%). When we turn to respondents who live in couples without children, we see that the majority develop an *extended-conjugal* type of configuration. The inclusion of parents from both sides of the couple means the extension of closeness to other households. Nearly 25% of those who were living just with the partner without children *show a nuclear-closed* configuration and nearly 12% are integrated in a *beanpole-down* type of configuration. For this last group it is interesting to see how their relational arrangements go beyond the household extending to their children's households as they include children, their spouses and grandchildren. Among those who live in 'couples with children', nearly 30% are in nuclear-closed configuration and 40% in extended-conjugal. These respondents are particularly likely to build a *nuclear-open* (6%) or a *siblings oriented* (12%) configuration. Despite living in couples with children, these individuals expand their intimate circle of personal relationships to friends and collaterals. Respondents living in a lone parent household are distributed in several types of configurations: 27% of the individuals are integrated in *sibling-oriented*, 27% are in *extended-conjugal*, 20% are in *nuclear-closed* and 20% in *friendship-up* configuration. Finally, those who live in complex family households are mostly represented in the *beanpole-down* (11%), *siblings-oriented* (6%) and *adult-children* (4.50%).

To summarize, the analysis of the standardized residuals reveals that among:

- Individuals *living alone:* the *friendship-up* configuration (4.8) and the *nuclear-closed* (1.5) are over-represented; whereas *the beanpole-down* (-1.4) and the *extended-conjugal* (-1.7) are underrepresented.
- Individuals living in households with *several persons*: the *friendship-up* (4.5) is overrepresented; whereas *nuclear-closed* (-1.5), *beanpole-down* (-1.2) and *nuclear-open* (-1.1) are underrepresented

- Individuals living in households of *couples without children*: the *beanpole-down* (4.8), the *adult-children* (1.4), and the *extended-conjugal* (1.3) configurations are overrepresented; whereas the *friendship-up* (-3.0), the *sibling-oriented* (-2.4) and the *nuclear-closed* (-1.3) are underrepresented.
- Individuals living in households of *couples with children:* the *sibling-oriented* (2.3), the *nuclear-closed* (1.0) and the *nuclear-open* (1.0) configurations are over-represented; whereas the *beanpole-down* (-4.1) and the *friendship-up* (-1.3) are underrepresented.
- Individuals in *lone parent* households: the *sibling-oriented* (2.3) and *the friendship-up* (1.4) configurations are over-represented;
- Individuals living in *complex family* households: the *beanpole-down* (3.0) is over-represented; whereas the *nuclear-closed* (-1.0) is underrepresented.

3.9. Life foci over the lifecourse

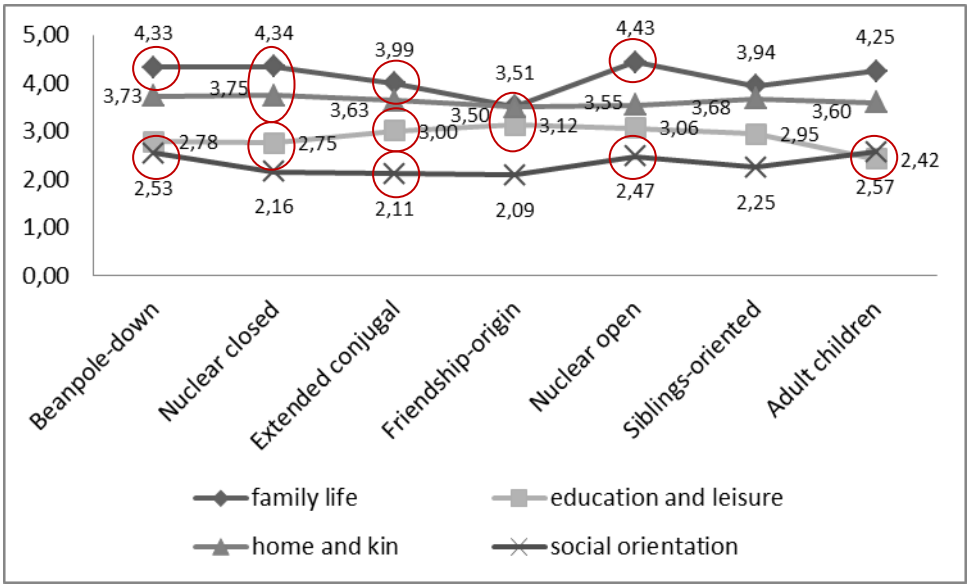
Individuals play several roles over the lifecourse and construct their life trajectories and personal networks moving across different settings of socialization, such as family, school, work, leisure, etc. Individuals invest differently in these life domains or *life foci* over time, and this may also account for the way they build their personal configurations. However, the opposite may also be true, as the type of arrangements in which individuals are embedded can influence their motivation to invest in some areas more than others. Thus we also found it important to cross-tab the type of configuration with the level of subjective investment in *family life*, *home and kin*, *education and leisure* and *social orientation*. Given the circularity of these two variables, we choose to analyse their correlation by computing the *Spearman coefficient* between life foci and type of configuration.

Table 31 Bivariate correlations between life foci and type of configuration (Spearman coefficients)

	beanpole-down	nuclear closed	extended conjugal	friendship-up	nuclear open	siblings-oriented	adult-children
Family life	.05*	.11**	-.07**	-.15**	.08**	-.02	.02
Education and leisure	-.04	-.10**	.08**	.08**	.04	.02	-.12**
Home and kin	.03	.07**	-.03	-.06*	-.03	.01	-.02
Social orientation	.10**	-.02	-.07**	-.04	.07**	.02	.07**

The investment in *family life* is positively associated with the construction of *beanpole-down*, *nuclear-closed* and *nuclear-open* and negatively associated with *extended-conjugal* and *friendship-up*. The investment *in education and leisure* is positively associated with the construction of *extended-conjugal* and *friendship-up* and negatively associated with *nuclear-closed* and *adult-children* configuration. The investment in *home and kin* is positively associated with the construction *of nuclear-closed*, and negatively associated with *friendship-up*. The investment in *social orientation* is positively associated with *beanpole-down*, *nuclear-open* and *adult-children*, and negatively associated with *extended-conjugal*. Looking at figure 41, we can see the relationships between the two variables.

Figure 41 Average score in the life foci by type of personal configuration (N=1487)



Those who are embedded in *beanpole-down* configurations seem to have invested more in the family life domain and social activities. If we look at those with *nuclear-closed* configurations, we see that they show a high investment in family life and home and kin domains, while also showing a low level of investment in *education and leisure*. Individuals integrated in *extended conjugal* configurations are negatively associated with investment in *family life* and *social orientation*, and by contrast, they invested in *education and leisure*. The *friendship-up* configuration is negatively associated with *family life* and *home and kin*; and positively associated with *education and leisure*. Those in *nuclear open* have invested more in *family life* and *social orientation*. Those embedded in *adult-children* configurations show a low investment in education and a high investment in *social orientation*. The preference for building up a *sibling-oriented* configuration is not related to a differential investment in any life foci.

3.10. Identification of the main predictors of personal configurations

The set of regression models enabled us to identify the main predictors of each type of configuration. The models include the same predictors that were considered in the previous chapter, namely: cohort, sex, social class, partnership status, parental status and type of household (table 32).

First, we should highlight the role of birth-cohort as a transversal predictor of all types of configurations. This means that either due to aging processes or to the experience of different generational backgrounds, individuals belonging to the three cohorts are differentially associated with the seven types of configurations.

Beginning with the modal type, our findings show that the *extended-conjugal* configuration is predicted by cohort, structural and family-biographical factors. Individuals born in the younger cohort are two times more likely to show this kind of configuration than the oldest one. Gender also seems to play a significant role as women are less likely to build this type of configuration than men. Routine employees are more likely than industrial workers to present this type of arrangement. However, the impact of structural factors vanishes as we introduce the biographical factors. Having no partner decreases the chance of being in this configuration, whereas those who do not have children are more likely to build up this type of arrangement than those who have.

All types of factors shape the *nuclear-closed* configuration. Individuals born in the younger cohort are less likely to show this type of configuration than older adults. Model 2 shows that women are more likely to build this kind of configuration than men, but this gender effect disappears with the introduction of family-biographical variables. Those with no partner are more likely to have this configuration than those with a partner, whereas those who are childless are less likely to have this kind of configuration. Living in couple without children and in extended households decreases the chance of constructing the nuclear-closed configuration.

Friendship-up is highly correlated with cohort, social class, conjugal and partnership statuses. Individuals born in the younger cohort have 3 times more chance of being embedded in friendship-up configurations than the oldest one. Concerning social class, those who are in more skilled professions are more likely to build this type of arrangement. Finally, not having a partner and foremost, not having children increase the chance of developing this type of configuration.

Table 32 Logistic regression model for each type of configuration (standardized coefficients)

		Sibling-oriented			Extended-conjugal			Friendship-up		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	1.80*	1.80*	1.62	1.01	.96	.85	1.25	1.24	1.52
	1970-75	3.43***	3.31***	2.44***	2.42***	2.34***	2.24***	3.23***	2.94***	2.75***
Men	Women		1.41	1.43		.69***	.84		0.89	0.85
Industrial worker	Self-employed		.72	.72		.78	.74		0.96	0.98
	Entrepreneurs/executives		.85	.84		.68	.63		2.65***	2.77***
	Routine employees		.70	.70		1.33*	1.31		1.07	0.93
	Professional/technicians		1.00	.97		.92	.85		1.97**	1.34
Partner	No partner			.83			.29***			1.96*
Children	No children			1.42			2.98***			3.17***
Couple with children	Living alone			.73			1.60			1.30
	Several persons			1.13			1.17			2.35
	Couple without children			.60			1.43*			0.76
	Lone-parent			2.90			.22			1.24
	Extended			.69			1.34			1.42

Table 33 Logistic regression model for each type of configuration (standardized coefficients)

		Nuclear closed			Nuclear open			Beanpole down			Adult children		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	1.17	1.20	1.50**	1.85*	1.89*	1.60	.61*	.63*	.58*	.22***	.23***	.18***
	1970-75	.35***	.37***	.45***	.76	.74	.66	.01***	.02***	.02***	.00	.00	.00
Men	Women		1.41**	1.14		.85	.91		1.25	1.31		.88	.93
Industrial worker	Self-employed		1.04	1.08		2.15	2.13		1.22	1.09		1.09	1.24
	Entrepreneurs/executives		.93	.95		2.58*	2.61*		.72	.74		.68	.69
	Routine employees		.86	.91		1.80	1.86		.77	.81		.44	.44
	Professional/technicians		.69	.79		2.38*	2.56*		.96	1.15		.46	.51
Partner	No partner			2.93***			.56			.82			1.15
Children	No children			.02***			.26			.29			.00
Couple with children	Living alone			.84			.98			1.20			.18**
	Several persons			.64			.00			.00			1.44
	Couple without children			.63***			.72			3.14***			.51
	Lone-parent			1.11			.00			6.94			.00
	Extended			.47***			.72			4.74***			.76

Sibling-oriented configuration is only predicted by cohort. Structural and family-biographical factors have no significant impact on this type of arrangement. Individuals born in the younger and middle cohorts are more likely to show this type of configuration than individuals belonging to the oldest cohort.

Nuclear-open is predicted by birth-cohort, with individuals from the middle cohort having twice the chance to build this type of configuration than individuals born in the oldest-cohort. This effect remains constant across the blocks. Besides birth-cohort, social class is the only significant predictor: those who work in entrepreneurs/executives and professionals/technicians positions are nearly 3 times more likely to have this type of configuration than industrial workers.

Regarding the *beanpole-down* configuration, cohort and biographical factors play a major role as predictors of this type of relational arrangement. Individuals from the middle and younger cohorts are less likely to have this type of configuration than the oldest cohort. The effect of the household structure seems paramount to the construction of this multigenerational arrangement. In fact, living in couple without children and in complex family household increases the chance of building up this type of configuration in 3 and 5 times, respectively.

Finally, *adult-children* configuration is mainly predicted by birth-cohort, with individuals born in the middle cohort being less likely to build this type of network than those born in the oldest cohort. Structural factors have no statistical significant effect on this configuration. Instead, household composition is a main family factor revealing that those who are currently living alone are more likely to build this configuration than those living in couple with children household.

In general, birth-cohort plays a crucial role across the seven types of configuration. However, family-biographical factors are of major importance, as partnership and parental status and the type of household fully impact all the arrangements, and increase the predictive value of all the regression models. Interestingly the impact of structural factors, in particular, social class assumes a strong predictive role when it comes to the inclusion of non-kin, i.e. in the prediction of friendship-up and nuclear-open configurations.

4. Mapping the main configurations in each birth-cohort

As we said in the introduction, there are some tricky effects associated with cross-cohort designs, which have to be carefully integrated in the analytical procedures. The main problem is related to the fact that we have a picture of the network at a specific moment in time, and this time is biographically, demographically and historically different across cohorts.

A careful inspection of the previous findings, for instance the ascending vs. descending orientation of the configurations, clearly reveals effects of age, in particular, the different pool of relatives available for inclusion in the networks, which seems to partly explain the different distribution of the configurations in each cohort. How can we isolate the effects of life-cycle? We adopted the strategy of intra-cohort analysis. In this way, we will be able to map the relational diversification within each cohort, and control for *age-period-cohort* effects. We began by considering the types of ties more frequently cited in each cohort.

Table 34 Percentage of respondents citing each type of tie by birth-cohort

Type of tie	1935-40	1950-55	1970-75
Children	80.8	82.8	58.8
Partner	58	76.6	77.1
Mother	1.8	15.2	50.2
Friends	15.1	21.8	28
Siblings	12.1	18.3	68.3
Father	0.5	6.6	38.6
Grandchildren	28.3	20.7	0.2
Children in-law	14.6	14.2	0.2
Siblings in-law	5.3	7	6.5
Neighbours	7.8	7.2	2.2
Mother in-law	0.5	3.7	11
Other non-kin (domestic employees, acquaintances,)	2.5	2.9	7.5
Collaterals (uncles, cousins)	1.6	4.5	5.2
Work colleagues (co-workers and boss)	0.9	2.5	7.5
Other kin (spiritual, stepfamily, grandparents)	1.8	1.9	6.5
Nephews	3.4	3.1	3.9
Father in-law	0	1.8	6.9

Similarly to the extraction of the typology in the total sample, we ran a cluster analysis within each cohort, by running a Hierarchical Clustering Analysis based on a measure of Euclidian distances between individuals, and on the Ward Clustering algorithm. Some categories were not included due to the residual percentages. For instance, father in-law was excluded from the cluster analysis within the oldest cohort.

4.1. Diversity in the birth-cohort of 1935-40

In the oldest cohort, we found five main types of configurations. The predominant type of configuration among the older adults is the *conjugal-open* which represents 41% of the respondents. Individuals belonging to this cluster name mainly the partner (M=.56) and neighbours (M=.16). All other ties are rarely mentioned. The second cluster, representing 27% of the older adults, is the *nuclear-closed* which includes the partner (M=.57) and children, with a slightly higher representativeness of sons than daughters ($M_{daughter}$=.97 and M_{son}=1.19). In this cluster we have to remember also that there are cases in which

Table 35 Average number of alters cited in each tie by cluster (N=440)

	Beanpole down	Conjugal open	Nuclear closed	Friendship up	Adult children	Total
	9%	42%	27%	11%	11%	100%
Partners	0.73	0.56	0.57	0.54	0.61	0.58
Ex-partners	0	0	0	0.04	0.02	0.01
Father	0	0.01	0	0.02	0	0.01
Mother	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.06	0	0.02
Son	1.28	0.36	1.19	0.78	2.73	0.99
Daughter	1.55	0.36	0.97	0.62	2.63	0.93
Brother	0.18	0.06	0.1	0.2	0	0.09
Sister	0.1	0.04	0.11	0.34	0.08	0.11
Grandparents	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Grandchildren	4.15	0.52	0.13	0.24	0.25	0.69
Step-family	0.03	0.02	0	0	0	0.01
Children in-law	0.83	0.2	0.11	0.24	0.06	0.22
Siblings in-law	0.05	0.03	0.04	0	0.04	0.03

Collaterals	0	0.07	0.07	0.18	0.04	0.07
Fictive kin	0.03	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.01
Female friend	.10	.04	.01	1.20	.00	.61
Male friend	.13	.03	.03	.94	.00	.56
Female neigbours	.05	.16	.03	.02	.04	.33
Male neigbours	.05	.16	.03	.02	.04	.33
Colleague	0	0.03	0	0	0	0.01
Other non-kin	0.03	0.08	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.06

Some siblings and siblings in-law can also be included, but not significantly. The third cluster, represented by 11% of the respondents, is the *adult children*, which is mainly composed of several adult children ($M_{daughter}$=2.73 and M_{son}=2.63), but it can also include the partner (M=.61). With the same percentage of 11%, we find the *friendship* configuration, mainly composed of friends ($M_{female\ friends}$=1.20 and $M_{male\ friends}$=0.94). Finally, the last cluster is composed of those who cited multigenerational ties in descending line, such as children ($M_{daughter}$=1.55 and M_{son}=1.28) and grandchildren (M=4.15), which we named as the *beanpole-down* configuration (9%).

One main finding that immediately stands out is the high level of diversity in the oldest generation. This finding sheds light on the process of diversification in later life, a phase frequently assumed as highly standardized, and often neglected as an empirical object in comparison with the proliferation of studies on young adults' lifecourse. Another finding is the hybrid nature of some configurations, such as the conjugal-open, in which neighbours stand out as close persons and the friendship-up, where friends are the main focus. Actually, it is interesting to see the differential salience of non-kin, as in some relational settings friends are of major importance and in other arrangements, neighbours are more central.

4.2. Diversity in the birth-cohort of 1950-55

In the middle cohort, we find of a low diversity as findings reveal only three main types of configuration: the *beanpole-down* (63%), the *siblings-oriented* (28%), and the *nuclear-open* (9%). The *beanpole-down* represents more than half of the sample, and it is composed of

partner (M=.78), children ($M_{daughter}$=1.15 and M_{son}=.98), children in-law (M=.25) and grandchildren (.53). Collaterals and neighbours may also be included. The second type is the *sibling-oriented* and it is mainly composed of the partner (M=.73) and siblings ((M_{sister}=.22 and $M_{brother}$=.25). Co-workers are also mentioned (M=.05). Finally, the third type of configuration is the *nuclear-open,* which is focused on the partner (M=.80) and children ($M_{daughter}$=.74 and M_{son}=1.07) and open to non-kin (($M_{female\ friends}$=1.57 and $M_{male\ friends}$=1.54). Children in-law (M=.22) and parents (M_{mother}=.28 and M_{father}=.11) can also be included.

We should stress two results: the massive predominance of the *beanpole-down* configuration in this cohort; and the low diversity of personal configurations, which seems to reflect some homogeneity in the family formation and life trajectories of the individuals belonging to this cohort, as they already have a large number of grandchildren. It is also interesting to see three main organizing principals of personal networks in the same cohort according to vertical line (beanpole-down), horizontal line (partner and siblings oriented) and based to the openness of the nuclear unit (nuclear open).

Table 36 Average number of alters cited in each tie by cluster (N=512)

	Beanpole down	Siblings oriented	Nuclear open	Total
	(63.3%)	(27.7%)	(9.0%)	100%
Partners	0.78	0.73	0.80	0.77
Ex-partners	0.02	0	0	0.01
Father	0.05	0.1	0.11	0.07
Mother	0.11	0.2	0.28	0.15
Son	0.98	0.3	1.07	0.80
Daughter	1.15	0.25	0.74	0.86
Brother	0.11	0.22	0.04	0.13
Sister	0.15	0.25	0.04	0.17
Grandparents	0	0	0	0.00
Parents-in-law	0.06	0.05	0	0.05
Grandchildren	0.53	0.05	0.09	0.36
Step-family	0	0.06	0	0.02
Children in-law	0.25	0.03	0.22	0.19
Siblings in-law	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.04
Collaterals	0.16	0.11	0.07	0.14
Fictive kin	0.01	0.01	0	0.01
Female Friends	.09	.20	1.48	.25
Male Frienbds	.02	.10	1.50	.18
Female neighbours	.06	.02	.06	.05
Male neighbours	.06	.03	.06	.05

Colleague	0,03	0,05	0	0,03
Other non-kin	0,04	0,04	0,02	0,04

4.3. Diversity in the birth-cohort of 1970-75

In the third cohort, we also found a high level of diversification. We identified five types of configurations: *nuclear-closed* (42%) which is focused on the partner (M=.91) and children (predominantly one child) ($M_{daughter}$=.86 and M_{son}=.83). Secondly, with 35% of the respondents, we found the configuration *couple* (35%), which is mainly focused on the partner (M=.62), but which can also include one more member but with no specific tie, meaning that it can be the mother (N=.51) or co-workers (M=.12) or other non-kin (M=11). This is the most pure conjugal configuration as it is strictly restricted to the couple, with no extension to parents from both sides of the couple. The third cluster is the *friendship-up* (13%), followed by the *extended conjugal* (7%) and *siblings-oriented* (4%). These configurations have the same composition as those identified in the total sample.

Table 37 Average number of alters cited in each tie by cluster (N=535)

	Nuclear closed	Couple	Extended conjugal	Friendship up	Sibling-oriented	Total
Partners	,91	,62	,97	,63	,79	,77
Ex-partners	,02	,08	0,00	,09	0,00	,05
Father	,38	,32	,61	,49	,42	,39
Mother	,44	,51	,68	,59	,58	,50
Son	,83	,09	,63	,32	,32	,47
Daughter	,86	,09	,55	,34	,47	,49
Brother	,17	,15	,11	,10	1,74	,21
Sister	,20	,24	,05	,18	2,37	,28
Grandparents	,04	,01	,03	,06	0,00	,03
Parents-in-law	,08	,01	1,71	,09	,32	,18
Step-family	,04	,01	,05	,03	,11	,03
Siblings in-law	,05	,04	0,00	,03	,21	,04
Collaterals	,10	,31	,21	,01	,05	,17
Fictive kin	,03	,02	0,00	,04	0,00	,02
Female friends	.08	.15	.08	1.57	.26	.30
Male friends	.04	.15	.05	.94	.26	.20
Female neighbours	.02	.01	.03	.03	.00	.02
Male neighbours	.02	.01	.03	.03	.00	.02

Colleague	,06	,12	,03	,09	0,00	,08
Other non-kin	,06	,11	0,00	,13	,21	,09

5. Discussion

Individualisation and pluralisation of family and personal relationships are major topics in the research agenda of sociology, in particular within the studies on family and personal networks. In this chapter, we set out to examine if and to which extent individuals' personal networks depends on the location of individuals in the broader social formation, as factors such as gender, social class, and life-course position shape the patterns of interdependencies with kin, friends and neighbours.

Individuals develop their personal networks in a variety of arrangements, by combining specific types of ties, which can be classified in seven major types of configurations. The more representative type of configuration is the *conjugal-extended* type, which focuses on the couple and parents on both sides. The second major configuration is the *nuclear-closed* since it is restricted to the family of procreation or to a small family nucleus of a lone adult person with one or two children. Other individuals, instead, combine relatives and non-kin ties in mixed networks and build up their personal networks through two main mechanisms: by opening the boundaries of the family of procreation to friends (the *nuclear-open*) and by opening the boundaries of the family of origin to friends and co-workers (the *friendship-up*).
Finally, we found three residual types of configurations that are quite distinctive from the previous ones revealing different ways of extending the core of the configuration to extended kin. Some individuals orient their relationships within both vertical and horizontal pattern ("cross" shape), by being close to their siblings and the family of the siblings: sibling's in-law, nephews, nieces, cousins, aunts, uncles (*sibling-oriented*). Others operate in a more descending logic as they include their children and their children's family of procreation (children-in-law and grandchildren) in a *beanpole-down* configuration; and other focus mainly on their numerous children (*adult-children*), in the presence or absence of the partner.

A careful morphological analysis of the seven types of personal configurations puts to the fore the existence of structuring binomial/dichotomise dimensions according to which individuals

integrate their significant others: *openness vs. closing of the boundaries to non-kin*; integration of *restrict/nuclear/primary kin vs. distant/extended/secondary kin*; predominance of *ascendants vs. descendants* lineage; predominance of an *horizontal vs. vertical orientation*. The combination of these axes fully shapes the composition and structure of personal configurations.

Regarding our second research issue on the role of several shaping factors on these relational choices, findings show the contextual nature of the exercise of choice in the building up of personal configurations as it is constrained by cohort, structural, and family-biographical factors. Birth-cohort plays a structuring role on the building up of all types of configurations, which do not vanished with the introduction of other types of factors. However, cohorts are entangled with structural factors, which in turn give consistency to cohorts. This circularity blurs the line between structural effects and lifecourse effects. On the other hand, when it comes to the impact of family-biographical factors, the significant role of partnership, parental and co-residency circumstances stand out as the stronger predictors of personal configurations, regardless the impact of cohort. In fact, the influence of birth-cohort is moderated by the impact of these variables.

When we look at the composition and orientation of each of these configurations, we immediately attribute the major dissimilarities to the different *demographic reservoirs* they have access to, due to the ages of the individuals in the 3 cohorts. This issue allied with the problem of the intertwining of birth-cohort and structural variables drove us to examine the processes of diversification in each birth-cohort separately. Two remarks should be stressed: first, personal networks are not static, but evolve over the lifecourse; second, the diversification of personal networks is not associated only with the different *demographic reservoirs*, since we found differentiation within the networks of individuals belonging to the same cohort. Since age really conditions the type of configurations by the pool of relatives we have available, we need to isolate these effects by analysing the plurality of configurations within each cohort. The structuring role of life-stage drove us to perform the configurational typology also within each cohort.

In the oldest cohort (1935-40), we found a high level of pluralization of personal networks, which supports the hypothesis that the diversification of personal relationships also takes place in later life. In the middle cohort (1950-55), we found a high level of homogeneity, as we only identified three main types of configurations, with the *beanpole-down* being

predominant. In the younger cohort (1970-75), we again found a high level of diversification with a range of five types of configurations. Basically, we were able to break up the "big" cluster of *extended conjugal* by identifying different ways of building up conjugal configurations, which also seem to reflect three moments of family formation: very early family formation, focusing strictly on the partner (*couple*), early family formation extending the network to parents (*extended conjugal*), and middle life combining the parental bond with the birth of a child (*nuclear*).

Chapter IV: Framing personal networks as social capital: expressive, instrumental and normative interdependencies

1. Introduction

The pluralisation of the lifecourse and family arrangements in contemporary societies have been said to contribute to the diversification of family networks and personal relationships. Individualisation thesis frames this diversification into a narrative of family decline and detachment from kinship bonds and support. Our main research question in this chapter is to what extent the diversity of personal networks has an impact on the type of social capital available for individuals in the context of the supposed individualisation in late modernity. Thus, it is important to look at personal configurations as a whole, and grasp how they can contribute to social integration by providing resources, or in other words, framing them as social capital.

In the previous chapter, we saw how personal configurations are in fact plural, with individuals combining different types of ties associated with different life-stages, their structural, normative and family biographical contexts, as well as their investments over the lifecourse in different life domains. Now, the question under research is linked to the patterns of interdependencies created inside these configurations which form different forms of social capital. How do instrumental, expressive and material and normative interdependencies intersect in each type of configuration, producing different patterns of social capital? How do these interdependencies take place and what are the logics underlying the exchanges? And what is the role of ego within the structure of relationships in which he/she is embedded? Are all networks members activated to provide and receive support from ego? How is social capital shaped by generational, structural and biographical contexts, producing segments of social vulnerability?

The link between the composition of personal configurations and the type of social capital stemming from the complex emotional and material interdependencies has been acknowledged by Widmer (2010), who found this association drawing on multiple samples across countries and life transitions (e.g., later life, young adults, post- divorce families). The author has been testing the hypothesis that the way people build and define their networks of family or close relationships – which the author conceptualized as personal or family configurations – has an impact on the type of interdependencies created within its members, and consequently, on the structure of social capital. Overall, according to first empirical

findings, configurations exclusively composed of kin, in particular those characterized by multigenerational ties, tend to be more densely connected, thus providing a *bonding* type of social capital, whereas mixed configurations (including non-kin) and horizontally oriented ones tend to be more sparsely connected and reveal a high individual centrality, therefore providing a bridging type of social capital.

Again, the individual is our focus point, as his or her embeddedness inside the configuration is our main coordinate to study the network of personal relationships. Therefore, the main aim is to characterize the patterns of social capital provided by the seven types of personal configurations, by focusing on the role of ego in the mobilization of social capital and contextualizing the dyadic exchanges between ego and their alters in the broader structure of the whole network, based on the reconstruction of the emotional support matrix of exchanges between all members.

As we mentioned in the theoretical framework, several authors have been putting forward some implicit rules which regulate exchanges within families and social networks. Thus, our idea is to understand whether these rules, which were mainly found in the context of family solidarity, also apply to personal networks. The volume and reciprocity of support will be explored through the examination of the role of ego as provider or receiver or both, combined with the multiplexity (expressive and instrumental) of social capital. Another research issue is the level of activation of the network for social capital provision, by comparing the potential support and the active centres of support. The contextualization of these patterns of interdependencies in the whole configuration structure will allow us to infer the degree of connectedness and the level of autonomy of ego in the personal configurations. Multiplexity will be assessed by examining the combination between emotional and practical support and normative consequences. Also more classical principles, which were systematically found as regulating the patterns of support, such as the descending genealogical orientation of the main flows, the genderification (women as main providers) and the kinship primacy of exchange, will be assessed.

We will characterize the dyadic exchange in personal configurations by relying on the classic critically distinction between expressive support and instrumental support, and also reflect on this dichotomy. The instrumental dimension includes three types of practical support: patrimonial or financial; support in kind; and services and care. The expressive dimension

includes three components of relationships: the potential emotional support perceived; the everyday contact; and the existence of conflict. We will use two types of indicators which evaluate the quantity of resources providers and receivers (the absolute number of alters who gave and received from ego) and the activation in the network, giving the potential of support (the relative number (proportion) of alters who gave and received from ego).

To understand the context in which these dyadic exchanges take place, we will examine the type of overall network structure of social capital, based on the sociometry of emotional support In terms of the network structure, our aim is to investigate the impact of the composition of personal configurations on the type of social capital provided by the emotional interdependencies developed between the alters, by examining the consequences of different configurations on the structure of exchange of potential emotional support. A combination of network measures such as size, density and transitivity (bonding), number of components, and ego's betweenness centrality bridging) provides a good approximation of the structures of social capital in family configurations. The structural analysis provide information on the level of connectedness and autonomy of ego, providing useful tools to assess the impact of trends of individualisation on the supposed weakness and contraction of the ties, with a major role placed on the individual to manage his/her relationships.

2. Indicators

Different types of indicators will be used to characterize the patterns of social capital according to the three functional properties of personal networks: expressive, instrumental and normative. Two forms of mapping the exchanges will be combined to analyse the expressive and instrumental functions: the *dyadic level*, by describing the exchanges between ego and each alter; and the *structural level*, by mapping the exchanges between ego and each alter, but also the connections between all alters.

- In relation to the *dyadic exchange*, we constructed two measures: the absolute (*number*) and the relative number (*proportion*) of alters who give and receive the different resources included in the expressive and instrumental categories of support. The number indicates the volume of network support (number of alters providers and receivers), and the proportion will be useful to supplement and go beyond the

limitations of this absolute number, by measuring the level of activation of support in the network potential (size).

- To assess the *structure* of the overall arrangement of connections, we compute structural indicators on the sociometry of potential emotional support: *density*, *transitivity* and *ego's betweenness centrality*.

Regarding the normative function, we will use individuals' average score on the three attitudinal indexes - family primacy, child centeredness and openness to new family forms – and we will explore the relationships with the dyadic and structural dynamics of expressive and instrumental support.

Table 38 Measures used as dependent variables in this chapter

Functions	Level	Indicators
Instrumental		
Financial/patrimonial Support in kind Services and care	Dyadic	Average proportion of alters who gave to ego Average number of alters who gave to ego Average proportion of alters who received from ego Average number of alters who received from ego
Expressive		
Emotional support	Dyadic	Average proportion of alters who gave to ego Average number of alters who gave to ego Average proportion of alters who received from ego Average number of alters who received from ego
	Structural	Density of emotional support Transitivity of emotional support Betweenness centrality of ego
Frequent contact	Dyadic	Average proportion of alters who contact everyday with ego (face-to-face) Average proportion of alters who never contact with ego (face-to-face)
	Structural	Density of frequent contact
Conflict	-	Existence of at least one conflictive dyad
Normative		
Family primacy		Average score of attitudinal index
Child centeredness		Average score of attitudinal index
New family forms		Average score of attitudinal index

3. A first picture of social capital: instrumental and expressive interdependencies

3.1. Instrumental support

In order to have a first overview of the extent of instrumental support, we computed the average number of alters who gave and received each type of support from ego, informing us on the support given and received by ego within the network. It is important to stress that when we refer to *support given* and *support received*, we are defining it from the perspective of ego, but in fact, we are calculating these two directions of support based on the number of alters who received from ego (support given) and the number of alters who gave to ego (support received).

We defined five levels of support according to the number of alters who received and gave: ‘1 alter;’ ‘2 alters; ‘3 to 4 alters; ‘5 to 10 alters; and ‘11 to 19 alters. Table 39 shows the distribution of the different categories of support in the total sample. First, we should stress that all the respondents have at least 1 alter who gave support (financial/patrimonial, in kind, and in services/care), i.e., all respondents received at least 1 support of each type from their network members. This means that there are no respondents with 0 supports. The same applies to the support given, since at least 1 network member received 1 support from ego in each kind. This also reveals that those respondents who included only 1 network member, received and gave 1 support of each type to the solo network member, making this solo network totally reciprocal.

Table 39 Support received: number of alters who gave each type of support to ego over the lifecourse

	Financial support			**Support in kind**			**Services and care**		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent

1 alter	1094	**73,6**	73,6	1030	**69,3**	69,3	707	**47,5**	47,5
2 alters	214	14,4	88,0	243	16,3	85,6	300	20,2	67,7
3-4 alters	153	10,3	98,3	177	11,9	97,5	330	22,2	89,9
5-10 alters	25	1,7	99,9	37	2,5	100,0	143	9,6	99,5
11-19 alters	1	,1	100,0	-	-	-	7	,5	100,0

Another striking result is the evidence of the predominance of the "1 alter provider" category, i.e., the predominance of "1 support" in the case of *financial/patrimonial support and support in kind*; as ¾ of the sample received financial/patrimonial help from only 1 alter, and 69% of the respondents received material support also from only 1 alter. Regarding *services and care*, which, by nature, includes more daily-basis and diverse tasks, we found a more heterogeneous landscape. If on the one hand, data show a quite high percentage of respondents who received support from only 1 alter (48%); on the other hand, 52% received support in service and care tasks from at least 2 alters.

Table 40 Support given: number of alters who received each type of support from ego over the lifecourse

	Financial support			**Support in kind**			**Services and care**		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 alter	746	50,2	50,2	682	45,9	45,9	602	40,5	40,5
2 alters	308	20,7	70,9	316	21,3	67,1	290	19,5	60,0
3-4 alters	327	22,0	92,9	346	23,3	90,4	353	23,7	83,7
5-10 alters	102	6,9	99,7	135	9,1	99,5	229	15,4	99,1
11-19 alters	4	0,3	100,0	8	0,5	100,0	13	0,9	100,0

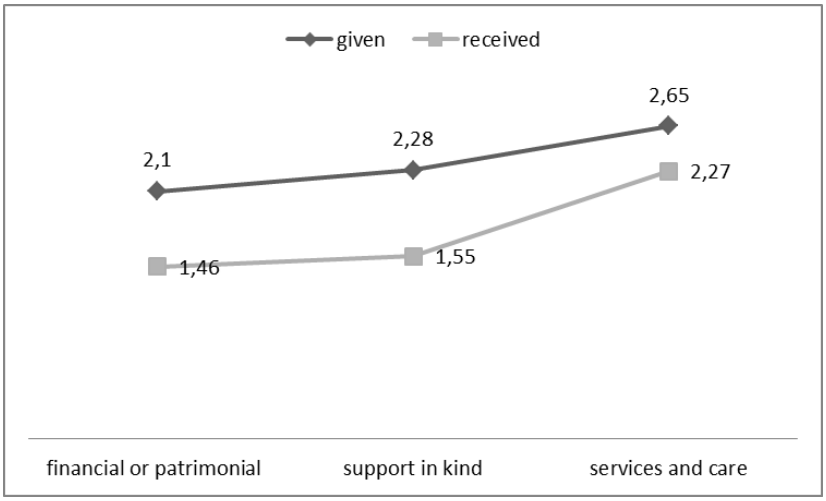
When it comes to the amount of *support given* by ego to the network members, we find a slightly different distribution. Regarding *financial support*, half of the respondents gave financial support to 1 alter, whereas the other half of respondents provided financial support to at least 2 alters. *Support in kind* follows quite the same proportion, with 46% of the respondents having given support to 1 alter, and 54% having given material support to 2 or more alters. As in the case of the support received, the provision of *services and care* is more intense than in the previous types, as the majority of the respondents (60%) helped at least 2

alters in care and services tasks. Comparing the reading of this table with the previous one, the two canons of "2 alters-receivers" and "1 alter-provider" suggest that the intensity of support given is always higher than the support received.

Actually, comparing the average number of alters-receivers (support given) and the average number of alters-providers (support received) in each type of support, we can see the unbalanced trend (figure 36).

Another finding concerns the nature of support, as financial support is the type of support in which there is the lowest number of alters-providers and alters-receivers, followed by support in kind and services and care. Actually, the average number of alters-providers in services and care (M=2.27) is almost twice the average number of alters-providers of financial support (M=1.46). Comparing the support given and received, we can see that the exchange of services and care is more reciprocal compared to the exchange of financial support and support in kind, where the gap between the support given and received is higher.

Figure 42 Support given and received: Average number of alters who received and gave to ego each type of support



We can summarize two general trends. First, although there are no respondents with 0 support providers, the majority of the respondents received support from only 1 alter, in particular, within the exchange of financial/patrimonial and support in kind. This means that support is rather rare than intense. The trend of support given is slightly different as half of the sample has given to 1 alter and the other half has given to at least 2 alters. This means that if in support received the "1 alter-provider" canon dominates, in support given, the "2 alter

receiver" canon rules. Second, comparing the three types of support, the exchange of financial support and support in kind is always less intense and more unbalanced in terms of support given and received. The exchanges of services and care are more common and reciprocal.

3.1.1. Shaping factors

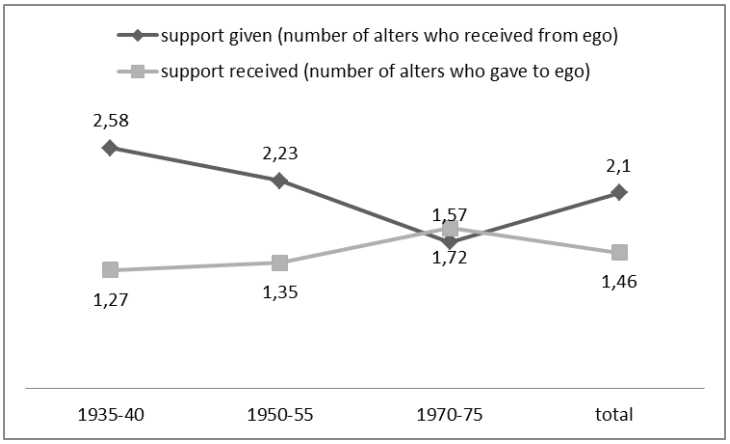
3.1.2. Birth-cohort

If we look at the support given and received by ego across the three specific types of support (financial, in gods and services/care) by birth-cohort, some significant findings stand out (figure 43).

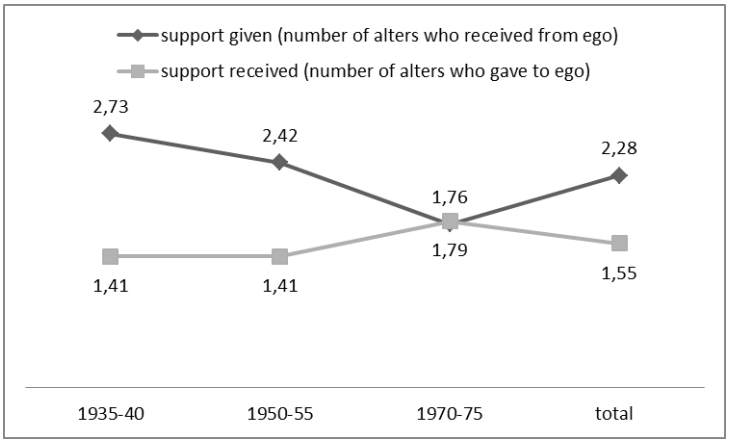
First, we found the same statistically significant trend across cohorts regarding the three types of support: individuals born in the two oldest cohorts always gave more than they received, whereas individuals from the youngest cohort show the reverse tendency, as they are mainly receivers. Regarding *financial support*, those from the oldest cohorts, on average, gave financial support to 2.58 alters and received from 1.27. On the contrary, in the younger cohort, the respondents gave on average to 1.57 and received from 1.72 alters. The trend is quite the same when it comes to providers of *support in kind*. However, in the case of the exchange of *services and care support*, we found a much more reciprocal trend, and the differences between cohorts are lower. Actually, in the youngest cohort there is a full convergence between the supports given and received by ego. Another important finding, which is transversal to all types of support, is that reciprocity is always higher in the youngest cohort than in the oldest ones. Comparing reciprocity across the three types of support, the exchange of services and care is the most balanced one; and it is also within this type of support that the cohort differences of support received are less pronounced.

Figure 43 Support given and received (average number of alters) by cohort

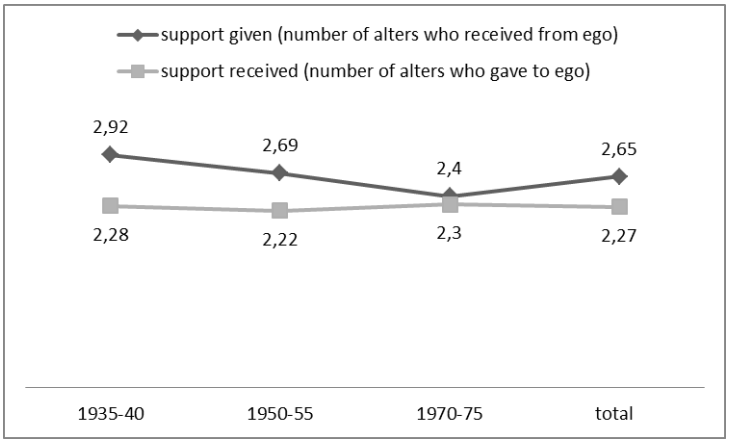
Financial or patrimonial



Support in kind



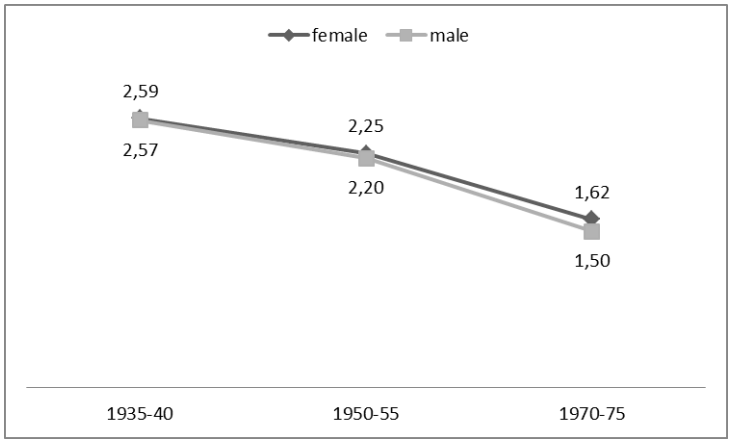
Services and care

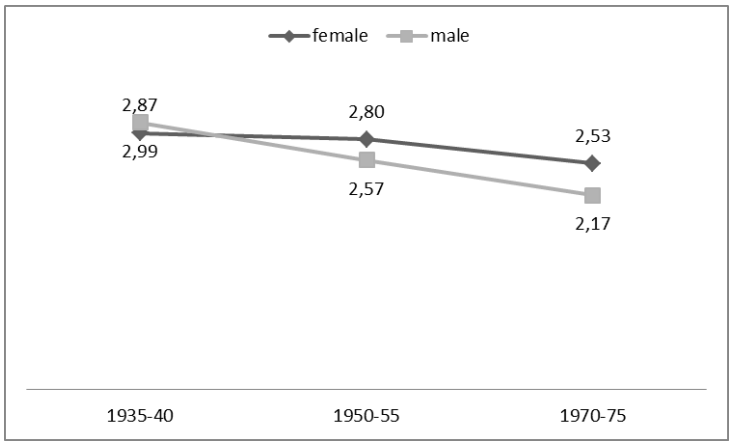


3.1.3. Gender

We also tested for a main effect of sex and for the interaction effect of sex and cohort in all types of support, and we found no statistical significant difference in both cases. Instead, we only found the previously mentioned main effect of cohort. Figure 38 illustrates the distribution of the mean differences between men and women across cohorts, in the case of support given, where we can see the convergence between them. Still, although not significant, we can see that in the case of support in kind and services and care assistance, women from the middle and younger cohorts provide to a higher level of alters than men.

Figure 44 Financial or patrimonial, support in kind and services and care: Support given (average number of alters-receivers) by cohort and sex



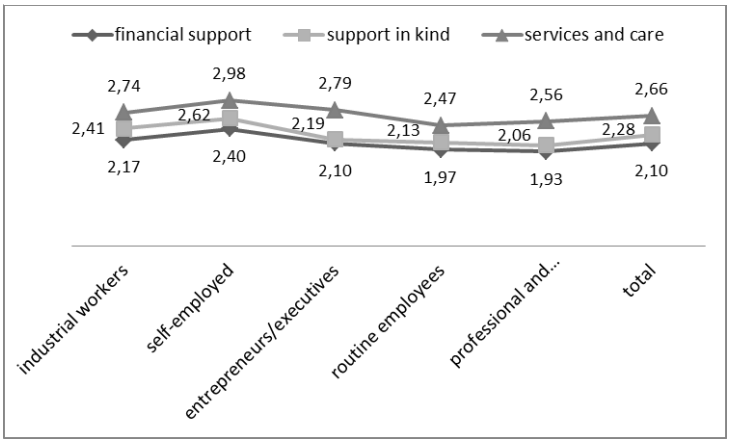


These findings suggest that gender does not strongly structure the support given and received in any specific type of support, which seems to somehow contradict the reproduction of gender roles on the practices of support, in which women are pointed out as the main givers (Wall et al., 2001). Yet, we would need to cross with the sex of the alters to confirm our hypothesis.

3.1.4. Social class and education

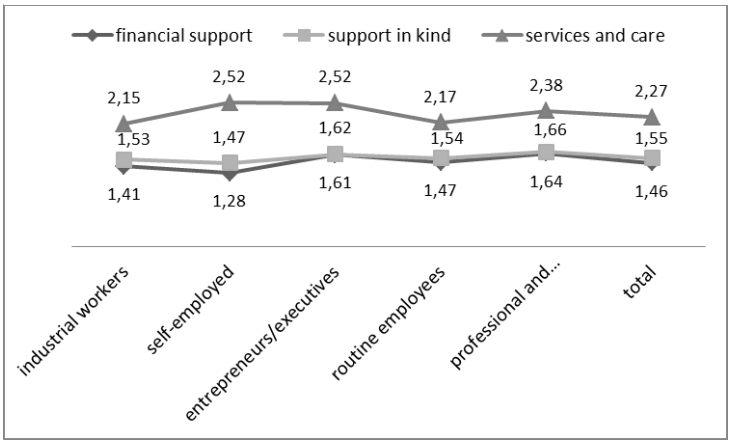
Two other important lines of differentiation in the patterns of social capital are the occupational position and the level of education. These two variables are useful proxy measures for individuals' social class, telling us whether the number of alters receiving and giving to ego is differentiated across the social spectrum, and thus the contribution of personal networks for the dynamics of social (in) equality. Again, we should be cautious with the strong correlation between cohort and these two structural variables. Therefore, after presenting the impact of social position and education level on the support given and received in the total sample, we will examine the behavior of these variables within each cohort.

Figure 45 Support given (number of alters-receivers) by social class



Support in kind and *financial support given* show the same trend: industrial workers and self-employed are those who gave to a higher number of alters ($M_{financial}$=2.17 and $M_{financial}$=2.40), compared with professional and technicians, routine employees and entrepreneurs ($M_{financial}$=1.93, $M_{financial}$ =1.97 and $M_{financial}$ =2.10). Regarding *services and care*, we found again industrial workers, self-employed and entrepreneurs above the average, and professional and technicians and routine employees giving to a lower number of alters

Figure 46 Support received (number of alters-providers) by social class

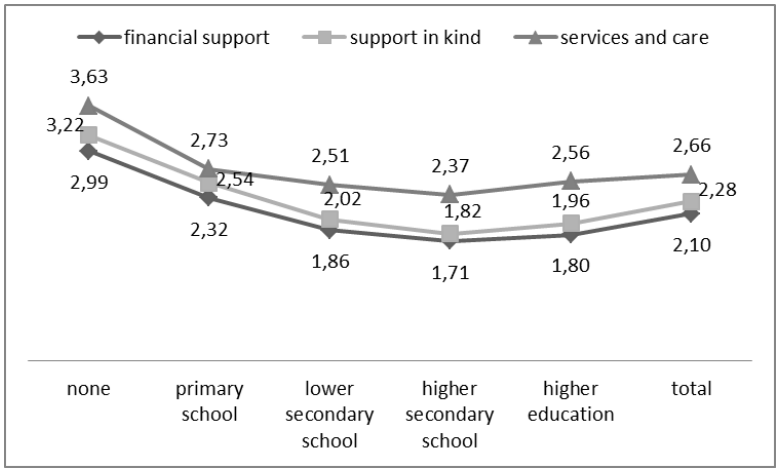


Regarding the *volume of support received*, we found quite the same trend across the three types of support. Concerning *services and care tasks*, industrial workers, routine employees and professional and technicians received from a low number of alters (below the average of 2.27), when compared to other occupations. The flow of the other two types of support is

similar, with executives/entrepreneurs and professionals/technicians having received from a higher number of alters than individuals belonging to other professional categories.

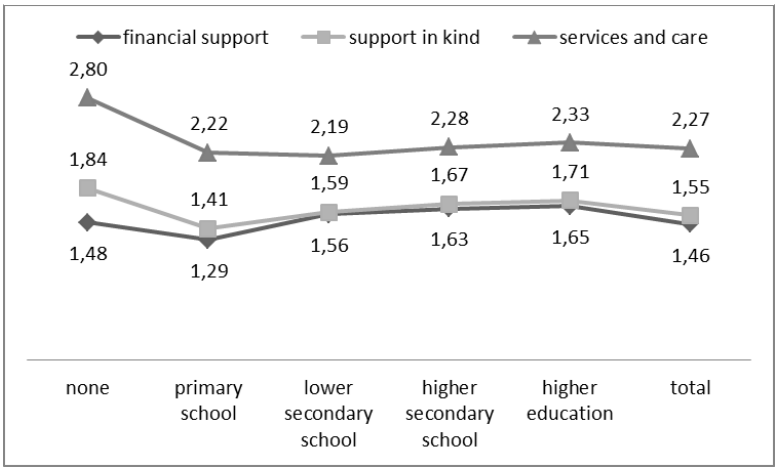
We also examined the role of *education* on the patterns of support. The average number of alters-receivers (support given) varies with the level of education (financial support: $F_{(1476,4)}$ = 17,51***; support in kind: $F_{(1476,4)}$ = 17,35***; services and care: $F_{(1476,4)}$ = 6,21***).

Figure 47 Support given (number of alters-receivers) by level of education



Regarding *financial support* and *support in kind*, those who did not attend school have given to a higher number of alters, followed by those with primaray school level. If we look at the provision of *services and care*, we found the respondents who never atended school as the main providers of services and care, when compared to the respondents with all other levels of education.

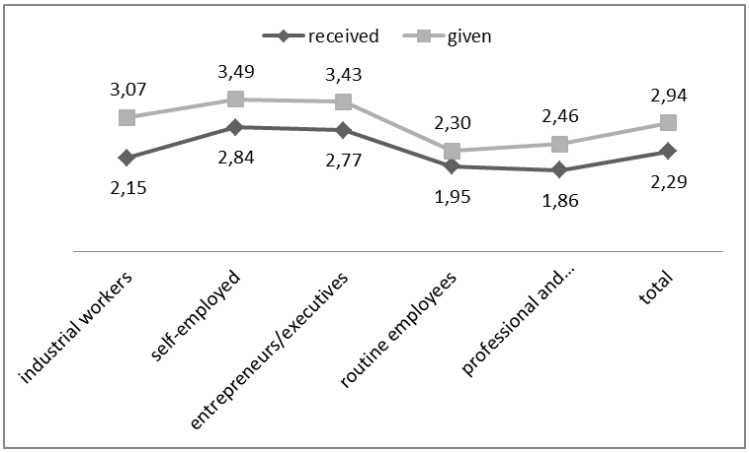
Figure 48 Support received (number of alters-providers) by level of education



The average number of alters-providers (support received) also varies with the level of education (financial support: $F_{(1476,4)} = 10,09$***; support in kind: $F_{(1476,4)} = 6,94$***; services and care: $F_{(1476,4)} = 2,34$*). Regarding *financial support*, those who have the primary level and those who never attended school have received from a lower number of alters. The distribution of *support in kind* is quite similar, as those with the primary or basic school received from a lower number of alters; yet, those who did not attend school show the higher number of alters who gave to them. Actually, in what concerns to *services and care*, those who never attended school stand out again with the higher number of alters who provide support to them (M=2.80).

Both educational level and social class are intertwined with cohort, thus the effect of these variables is blurred by this entangled relationship. For instance, industrial workers and individuals who have less than primary school are overrepresented in the oldest-cohort. A differential pattern of support associated with these two categories may be related with cohort and not with individuals' social position. Thus, in order to isolate these effects, we compared the impact of education and occupational position in the exchange of support within each cohort, and we found a significant effect of social-occupational position only in the case of the exchange of services and care in the oldest cohort (figure 49).

Figure 49 Cohort of 1935-40: services and care given and received by social class



Looking at the *oldest cohort*, we can see that concerning services and care received, self-employed and executives/entrepreneurs have received from a larger number of alters than individuals in all other occupations (F=4.55, p<.000). Concerning the support given, again self-employed and executives/entrepreneurs and also industrial workers have given to a larger

number of alters than individuals in all other occupations (F=4,17, p<.000). This means that if on the one hand, these categories have received a higher volume of services and care support, on the other hand, they also gave to a higher level of network members.

3.1.5. Predicting the exchange of instrumental support

To provide an integrated reading of the shaping factors on the support given and received, we ran a set of regression models with the same predictors that we used in the previous chapters and again organized by blocks, which subsequently entered in the models.

Table 41 shows the impact of the contextual factors on the exchange of financial support. Regarding the *financial support given,* we see the impact of birth-cohort across all blocks. Individuals belonging to the middle and younger cohorts have given to a lower number of alters than the individuals from the oldest cohort. Social class has no impact on the financial support given, since it is transversal to all occupational positions. The introduction of family-biographical factors revealed the role of parental status and household composition on the financial support given. Those who are childless have gave to a lower number of alters, as well as those who live alone (model 3). Instead, those who are currently living in complex family households have given to a higher number of alters than those who live in couple with children. Cohort is the main predictor of the support given as the power of the model decreased while adding the other factors.

Table 41 Regression model on financial and patrimonial support (unstandardized coefficients)

		Financial or patrimonial support					
		Support given by ego (number of alters who received from ego)			**Support received by ego** (number of alters who gave to ego)		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	**-0,36*** **	**-0,34*** **	**-0,46*** **	0,08	0,08	0,04
	1970-75	**-1,03*** **	**-1,01*** **	**-1,06*** **	**0,45*** **	**0,42*** **	**0,35*** **
Men	Women		0,09	0,08		-0,02	-0,01
Industrial worker	Self-employed		0,02	0,01		-0,04	-0,04
	Entrepreneurs/executives		-0,03	0,02		**0,19***	**0,20***
	Routine employees		-0,16	-0,14		0,05	0,04
	Professional/technicians		-0,05	0,09		0,14	0,15
Partner	No partner			0,03			-0,04
Children	No children			**-0,32***			0,14
Couplewith children	Living alone			**-0,52*** **			-0,13
	Several persons			-0,43			-0,20
	Couple without children			-0,02			-0,07

	Lone-parent			-0,44			-0,47
	Complex			**0,39*** **			0,15
R2		0.07	0.08	0.11	0.04	0.05	0.06
F		58.73***	17.29***	12.57***	33.65***	10.77***	6.30***

Concerning the *financial support received*, some interesting findings stand out. Again, we found the main role of cohort as predictors, with individuals from the youngest cohort being those who received financial support from a higher number of alters. This effect remains while adding other factors. Social class has an impact, even when controlling for cohort, showing that executives and entrepreneurs have received from a higher number of alters than industrial workers. Family-biographical factors have no significant impact on the financial support received. Again, the variance explained decreases from the first model to the next, revealing the major role of birth-cohort.

In sum, the *financial support given* (number of alters-receivers) is mainly related with cohort (the oldest gave to more alters), but also with family-biographical variables, in particular, with the fact of having children or not (those who are childless gave to few alters); whereas the number of *financial support received* (number of alters-providers) is predicted by cohort (the younger received from more alters) and structural contexts (entrepreneurs/executives received from more alters).

Table 42 show the regression model for support in kind given and received taking the number of alters who received and who gave to ego as dependent variables.

Table 42 Regression model on support in kind (unstandardized coefficients)

		Support in kind					
		Support given by ego (number of alters who received from ego)			**Support received by ego** (number of alters who gave to ego)		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	**-0,31***	**-0,28***	**-0,45*****	0,01	0,01	-0,02
	1970-75	**-1,00*****	**-0,96*****	**-1,08*****	**0,38*****	**0,37*****	**0,34*****
Men	Women		0,19	0,17		0,02	0,01
Industrial worker	Self-employed		0,00	0,00		0,01	0,01
	Entrepreneurs/executives		-0,17	-0,11		0,08	0,11
	Routine employees		**-0,27***	**-0,24***		0,00	0,00
	Professional/technicians		-0,17	0,00		0,04	0,07
Partner	No partner			0,04			0,14
Children	No children			-0,26			-0,01
Couple with children	Living alone			**-0,67*****			**-0,25*****
	Several persons			-0,43			-0,24
	Couple without children			-0,10			-0,03

	Lone-parent			-0,68			-0,43
	Extended			**0,62*** **			**0,23*** **
R2		0.06	0.06	0.09	0.03	0.03	0.04
F		45.34***	14.33***	12.05***	23.48***	6.84***	4.75***

Regarding the *material support (in kind) given*, birth-cohort assumes a major role as its effect remains constant across the blocks. Those who belong to the youngest and middle cohort have given to a lower number of alters than those who belong to the oldest cohort (model 1). Social class also plays a significant role as respondents working as routine employees gave to a lower number of network members than industrial workers. Household composition is the only family-biographical factor, with respondents who live alone having given to a low number of alters and instead, those who live in complex family households having given to a high number of alters (model c).

Concerning the *support in kind received* only birth-cohort and family-biographical factors act as predictors. The youngest cohort received from a higher number of alters than the oldest one. Model 3 shows the effect of household with those who live alone receiving from a low number of alters and, in the contrary, those who live in complex household families receiving more. In both models, birth cohort is the main predictor and the model decreases with the introduction of structural and family-biographical factors.

In sum, the *material support received* (number of alters-providers) is mainly predicted by birth-cohort (the younger received from more alters) and household composition (living alone and in complex families). The *support in kind given* (number of alters-receivers) is shaped by cohort as individuals from the middle and younger cohorts gave to a low number of alters. Social class also shape support given as routine employees gave to few alters.

Finally, table 43 show the predictors of the dyadic *exchange of services and care* over the lifecourse.

Table 43 Regression model on services and care support (unstandardized coefficients)

		Services and care					
		Support given by ego (number of alters who received from ego)			**Support received by ego** (number of alters who gave to ego)		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3

1935-40		1950-55	-0,24	-0,20	**-0,33***	-0,06	-0,02	-0,12
		1970-75	**-0,55*****	**-0,49*****	**-0,52*****	0,01	0,05	-0,04
Men		Women		0,22	0,23		0,11	0,09
Industrial worker		Self-employed		0,13	0,10		0,38	**0,36****
		Entrepreneurs/executives		0,09	0,12		0,39	**0,41***
		Routine employees		**-0,29***	-0,26		0,00	0,02
		Professional/technicians		-0,11	0,04		0,21	**0,30***
Partner		No partner			-0,11			0,16
Children		No children			**-0,47***			-0,29
Couple with children		Living alone			**-0,45***			**-0,58*****
		Several persons			-0,46			**-0,94***
		Couple without children			0,07			-0,10
		Lone-parent			0,78			0,59
		Extended			0,28			0,11
R2			0.01	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.03
F			8.35***	3.78***	4.43***	0.24 n.s.	1.91 n.s	3.18***

Again, cohort is the main predictor of *support in services and care given*; with individuals from the youngest cohort having given to a lower number of alters than those from the oldest cohort. Social class is the only significant structural predictor, with routine employees having given to a low number of alters than industrial workers (model 2). Parental status and household composition reveal as main predictors of services given as the power of explanation improves with the introduction of these variables. Those without children have given to a low number of alter than those with children, as well as those living alone (model 3).

Regarding the *support in services and care received*, we found that birth-cohort is not a significant predictor and structural variables are only significant predictors through the mediation of family-biographical factors (model 3). With the introduction of family-biographical factors, those who are self-employed, executives/entrepreneurs and professional and technicians received from a higher number of alters than those who work in the industrial sector. Again, those who live alone or in a household with several persons received from a lower number of alters.

In sum, the volume of support in *services and care* given and received is predicted by quite different constellations of factors. *Support given* is mainly predicted by biographical factors (those with no children and living alone gave to few alters), but also by birth-cohort (the younger gave to few alters) and social class (routine employees gave to few alters). Instead, the volume of support in services received is not predicted by birth-cohort, and the effect of social class (routine employees gave to few alters) is only significant when we control for

family biographical factors, in which household composition (living alone and with several persons), stand out as the major shaping factor.

3.2. Emotional support

We will now examine the potential emotional support in case of need at two levels: dyadic and structural.

In *dyadic* terms, i.e, the proportion of alters who would give and receive from ego, there are no statistical significant differences between the three cohorts. Regarding the *structure* of emotional support, we aim to explore whether there is a decreasing trend of bonding social capital over cohorts and instead an upturn trend of bridging social capital. Therefore, we tested the main effect of birth-cohort on the structural indicators. We ran a one way ANOVA and we performed multiple comparison tests to identify the differences between cohorts.

Table 44 Average mean of structural and dyadic indicators of emotional support by birth-cohort – one-way ANOVA (mean, standard deviation and F)

			1935-40	1950-55	1970-75	Total	F
Structural	Density	M	.77	.74	.72	.74	3.88*
		SD	.29	.28	.28	.28	
	Transitivity	M	.84	.81	.77	.80	6.72***
		SD	.30	.29	.31	.30	
	Ego's betweenness centrality	M	.08	.10	.14	.11	8.66***
		SD	.20	.20	.26	.22	
Dyadic	Proportion of alters that would receive from ego	M	.84	.84	.85	.84	.09 n.s.
		SD	.44	.40	.36	.40	
	Proportion of alters that would give to ego	M	.79	.78	.81	.79	.81 n.s.
		SD	.49	.45	.40	.45	

Birth-cohort has a statistically significant effect on density, transitivity, and ego's betweenness centrality (table 44). Regarding *bonding* indicators, the younger cohort has less dense networks than the oldest one; and the younger cohort has less transitive networks than the older and the middle cohorts. Regarding the *bridging* indicator, respondents from the youngest cohort are more central in their networks as intermediaries than the respondents from older and the middle cohorts. Finally, regarding the dyadic exchanges between ego and the alters, there are no statistically significant effects of cohort on the proportion of alters who gave and received emotional support from ego.

3.2.1. Predicting the structure of emotional support

We decided to carry out a set of regression models for the three structural indicators: density, transitivity and ego's betweenness centrality.

Density is mainly predicted by cohort, with the younger and middle cohort having less dense networks than the oldest one (model 1). Regarding structural variables, social class and gender play a significant role as predictors. Women have less dense networks than men; and respondents belonging to all occupational positions have less dense networks than industrial workers. Parental status is the only family biographical predictor with a significant effect on the emotional support density, as those who are childless have less dense networks (model c).

Transitivity is predicted by all types of shaping factors. Individuals from the youngest cohort are embedded in less transitive networks than those form the oldest cohort (model 1). Again when it comes to gender, women have less transitive networks than men. Concerning social class, those who work as professional and technicians are integrated in less transitive networks than those who are industrial workers. However, the effect of social class disappears as family biographical factors are introduced in the model, remaining only the previous cohort and gender effects. Those with no partner and no children have less transitive networks.

The *bonding* structure of personal networks seems to be mainly associated with cohort and family-biographical factors. The networks of the younger adults are less dense and transitive, which is likely to be related with the higher proportion of non-kin in this cohort. The gender difference in the density and transitivity of emotional support seems to be related with cross-sex preferences, i.e. as men include more female alters, who are more likely to provide emotional support to ego and to other network members than male alters. Consequently, the overrepresentation of female alters, often considered as kin-keepers, increases the density and transitivity of men's personal networks. Instead, the higher proportion of male alters in women's networks decreases the density and transitivity of women's networks. Social class is entangled with birth-cohort, thus it can be an overlap between industrial workers and individuals from the oldest cohort, and thus this category is linked with more densely connected networks. Having a partner and having children increase the transitivity of the

network as these ties (partner and children) enhance the interdependencies of relatives from both sides of the couple.

Table 45 regression model for structural indicators (unstandardized coefficients)

		Density			**Transitivity**			**Ego's centrality betweenness**		
Reference category	Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
1935-40	1950-55	**-,04***	**-,04***	**-,04***	-,03	-,03	**-,04***	,02	,02	,02
	1970-75	**-,05****	**-,05****	**-,06****	**-,07*****	**-,06*****	**-,07*****	**,06*****	**,06*****	**,05****
Men	Women		**-,04****	**-,04****		**-,03***	**-,03***		,00	,01
Industrial worker	Self-employed		**-,05***	**-,05***		-,02	-,02		,01	,01
	Entrepreneurs/executives		**-,08****	**-,07****		-,03	-,02		-,02	-,02
	Routine employees		**-,04***	**-,04***		-,04	-,03		,01	,00
	Professional/technicians		**-,07****	**-,06****		**-,07****	-,04		,02	,01
Partner	No partner			-,02			-,06**			**,01***
Children	No children			-,05*			-,12***			**,09*****
Couple with children	Living alone			-,01			,01			-,01
	Several persons			,08			,15			-,10
	Couple without children			-,03			-,03			,00
	Lone-parent			,05			,11			,04
	Extended			-,02			-,04			,00
R^2		0.01	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.03
F		4.14***	4.52***	3.12***	7.52***	4.06***	5.45***	8.76***	2.86***	3.34***

Finally, concerning *ego's betweenness centrality*, the model revealed that birth-cohort and family biographical factors are the main predictors of this index of a *bridging* type of social capital. Individuals born in the younger cohort are more central in their networks than those from the oldest cohort (model 1). Concerning the impact of family biographical factors, again partnership and parental statuses are the main predictors, as those who are not living with a partner and with no children become more central in their networks.

The prevalence of *bridging* type of social capital in the younger cohort is again likely to be associated with the integration of friends and co-workers, who may not be connected with the other network members (for instance, other friends or individuals' relatives) unless through ego. Again, the partnership and parental status is determinant in the network structure. As we saw in the previous analysis of the bonding indicators, having a partner and children increases the connectedness of the network. In the absence of these pivotal ties, the role of ego remains central in the networks' interdependencies, and interactions are not channelled through those ties.

After this first comparative analysis of the exchange of instrumental support and the bonding and bridging type of emotional support across the three birth-cohorts, in the context of structural and family differentiated circumstances, we will now focus on the relationship between the type of personal configuration and those dimensions of expressive and instrumental interdependencies. At the end, we will also explore the recursive relationship between configurations and normative attitudes towards family life and gender roles.

4. Linking personal configurations and social capital

The previous social contextualization of instrumental and emotional support was carried out without taking into account the type of personal networks in which these exchanges take place. In order to complete our configurational analysis, we will now examine the patterns of social capital provided by each of the seven types of personal configurations identified in the total sample. This analysis will be organized according to instrumental, expressive and normative dimensions. At the end, we will be able to provide an integrated and complex reading of personal configurations and social capital.

4.1.1. Financial or patrimonial support

Regarding the exchange of financial support, again the estimation of support given is always higher than the estimation of the support received, with the exception of the respondents in the *friendship-up* configuration.

Table 46 Exchange of financial or patrimonial support: Average number and proportion of elements who gave and received from ego

	Beanpole-down (8,12)	Nuclear-closed (3,49)	Extended-conjugal (3,31)	Friendship-up (4,02)	Nuclear-open (7,47)	Siblings-oriented (6,50)	Adult-children (6,98)	Total (4,34)
Given								
Number of alters who received from ego (average)	3.99	2.11	1.60	1.49	2.71	2.21	4.80	2.10
Proportion of alters who received from ego (%)	52	67	57	44	39	39	72	56
Received								
Number of alters who gave to ego (average)	1.41	1.20	1.48	1.61	1.97	1.79	1.35	1.46
Proportion of alters who gave to ego (%)	20	41	54	48	28	32	21	43

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Individuals in *beanpole-down* received support from a low number of alters (M=1.41), which also corresponds to a low proportion of alters, as just nearly 1/5 of the network provided financial support to ego. Instead, these individuals gave financial support to an average number of 4 alters (M=3.99), which corresponds to nearly half of the network (M=0.52). This is the case of a large configuration; in which ego is a strong financial provider as he/his has given support to a high number of alters, also corresponding to a large centre of receivers. Instead, these configurations include a low centre of alters-providers.

Individuals belonging to *nuclear-closed* also included a low number of alters who gave financial support to them (M=1.20), but in this case, this number represents around 40% of the network members (in the previous type, the number of network providers represented just 20% of the network potential). They include an average number of elements to whom they provide support (M=2.11), but who represent nearly 70% of the network. Again, individuals from this configuration are mainly providers as they give to a higher number and to a higher proportion of elements than they receive. Contrary to the previous arrangement, the *nuclear-*

closed configuration is a small network, yet with a large centre of alters-receivers, and an average centre of alters-providers.

Concerning individuals pertaining to the *extended-conjugal*, we find a more reciprocal pattern of exchange. They gave support to a low number of elements (M=1.60), but they also receive from a low number of elements (M=1.48). In terms of representation in the network, the proportion of elements exchanging in both directions is around 55%. This is again the case of a small network, but contrary to the *nuclear-closed*, the exchange is quite reciprocal and the active centre of support in both directions corresponds to half of the network.

Friendship-up is the only type of personal configuration in which ego report having received more than giving. In this type of configuration, the average number of alters who gave to ego (M=1.61) is higher than the total mean, while the number of alters who received from ego (M=1.49) is lower than the average number in the total sample. It is important to underline that the proportion of alters who gave to ego is higher than the average, whereas the proportion of alters who received from ego is quite low. This is the only configuration in which ego is the privileged receiver of financial support and a very low provider. Although the network is quite small, half of the networks was activated to provide financial support to him/her.

The *nuclear-open* is also characterized by a high number of elements who gave to ego, but representing just around 28% of the network potential (below the average, M=0.43). Regarding the support given, these individuals gave to an average number of 2.71, which represents nearly 40% of the alters. This means that despite the high number of alters who received from ego, they correspond to a low percentage of the network proportion (below .56). *Nuclear-open* is thus the example of a large network; although support exchange takes place in a small proportion of the network, in which ego is an average provider.

Sibling-oriented is also characterized by a higher reciprocity of exchange. They gave and received from an average-high number of alters, ($M_{received}$=1.79 and M_{given}=2.21), but which correspond to a low proportion of the network (between 30% to 40% of alters), below the average. This is an example of a large network, but quite reciprocal. The exchanges flow between a small proportion of givers-receivers.

Finally, individuals in *adult-children* gave to a very high number of elements (M=4.80), which corresponds to 72% of the network members; whereas they received from a very low number of elements (M=1.35), which correspond to 20% of the potential of the network. As in the case of the *beanpole-down*, this is the case of a large configuration; in which ego is again a strong financial provider as he/she has given support to a high number of alters, also corresponding to a very large centre of receivers. By contrast, these configurations include a low centre of alters-providers.

4.1.2. Support in kind

Regarding the exchange of support in kind, again the perception of support given is always higher than the perception of the support received across all types of personal configurations.

Table 47 Exchange of support in kind: Average number and proportion of elements who gave and received from ego

	Beanpole-down	Nuclear-closed	Extended-conjugal	Friendship-up	Nuclear-open	Siblings-oriented	Adult-children	Total
Given								
Number of alters who received from ego (average)	4.64a	2.14b	1.78b	1.64b	2.86d	2.40d	5.36c	2.28
Proportion of alters who received from ego (average)	61b	68a	62b	48c	41c	42c	79a	60
Received								
Number of alters who gave to ego (average)	1.63a	1.29c	1.53c	1.56c	2.06b	1.90b	1.96b	1.55
Proportion of alters who gave to ego (average)	23a	43c	55b	47b	28a	34c	31a	45

The *beanpole-down* is again characterized by giving support in kind to a higher number and proportion of alters than receiving. The average number of alters receiving from ego is about 4.64, which corresponds to a proportion of 0.60. Instead, these individuals report having received from 1.63 elements, which corresponds to 23% of the network members. The exchange is thus strongly unbalanced and despite the high number of alters, the proportion of alters who gave to ego is very small, whereas the proportion of alters who received from ego is at the average level. Again, as in the case of financial support these respondents are main

providers as material support is given to a high number of alters and a high percentage of the whole network. On the contrary, they received from a low number which correspond to a very small proportion of this big configuration.

The *nuclear-closed* is also characterized by giving more than receiving, as they gave to 2.14 alters and received from 1.29 alters. Actually, they received from a higher proportion of alters (M=0.43) than individuals belonging to the previous configuration. It is thus a small network, but with an average proportion of alters-providers and a high proportion of alters-receivers. This is again a small network, but quite reciprocal and with 60% of active members in both directions.

As in the case of the exchange of financial support, the *extended-conjugal* is again characterized by a strong reciprocity, as the average difference between the number of alters who received from ego and the number of elements who gave to ego is below the average in the total sample (0.06 in comparison with 0.15 in the total sample). These exchanges take place between a small number of alters, but which correspond to nearly 60% of the network members.

The exchanges in *friendship-up* configurations are even more reciprocal. Still, these individuals have given support to a low proportion of the network (M=0.48, below the average). Again, respondents in these configurations are very low providers, but in this case, they are average receivers. Again the exchange takes place in a small active centre (40 to 50%).

The *nuclear-open* is characterized by an average reciprocity, but the flows take place between a small proportion of the network members. They gave to 41% of the network members and they received from 28% of the network members. This is again an example how large networks are not necessarily equivalent to high social capital, as the active members represent a small proportion of the potential.

The *sibling-oriented* presents quite the same pattern of the *nuclear-open*, but it is highly reciprocal. Contrary to the nuclear-closed, which is also a large network, the sibling-oriented is quite reciprocal and the exchanges take place within a small proportion of givers-receivers.

Finally, as in the exchange of financial support, the individuals belonging to the *adult-children* configuration gave to a high number of alter which covers almost 80% of the network, whereas they received from nearly an average number of M=1.96, which represents 30% of the network. They are again strong providers. Again, ego is both a strong provider and a low receiver in number and proportion.

4.1.3. Support in services and care

We saw in the first section that the assistance in services and care is the main type of support, in the sense that the average number of alters giving and receiving this type of help is higher in comparison with other types of instrumental support. As in the previous instrumental dimensions, the perception of support given is always higher than the perception of the support received across all types of personal configurations. However, the differences between given and received are not so sharp over the configurations, with the role of providers and receivers being more diluted.

Table 48 Exchange of support in services and care: Average number and proportion of elements who gave and received from ego

	Beanpole-down 8,12	Nuclear-closed 3,49	Extended-conjugal 3,31	Friendship-up 4,02	Nuclear-open 7,47	Siblings-oriented 6,50	Adult-children 6,98	Total 4,34
Given								
Number of alters who received from ego (average)	4.92c	2.21a	2.12a	2.24a	4.84c	3.14b	4.98c	2.65
Proportion of alters who received from ego (average)	63d	68c	70c	61d	65d	53a	74b	67
Received								
Number of alters who gave to ego (average)	2.97b	1.83a	1.95a	2.10a	4.61d	2.82b	3.64c	2.27
Proportion of alters who gave to ego (%)	40a	58b	66d	59b	61c	48a	53b	59

The *beanpole-down* is again characterized by giving support in services and care to a higher number and proportion of alters than receiving. The average number of alters receiving from ego is about 4.92, which corresponds to a proportion of 0.63. Instead, these individuals report having received from 2.97 elements, which corresponds to 40% of the network members. The

exchange is thus strongly unbalanced as individuals are main providers (above the average) and average receivers.

The *nuclear-closed* is characterized by giving support to a low number of alters (M=2.21) and also receiving from a low number of alters (M=1.83). Still, these exchanges represent nearly 60% to 70% of the network. It is thus a small network but with a high number of active members of support in services and care. They are average providers and receivers.

As in the case of the previous dimensions of instrumental support, the *extended-conjugal* is again characterized by a strong reciprocity, as the average difference between the number of alters who received from ego and the number of elements who gave to ego is below the average in the total sample. They gave and received from a low number of alters, but the proportion of alters who are mobilized to provide and receive support from ego is above the average (around .70). These individuals have small networks but fully active in both directions.

The exchanges in *friendship-up* configurations are even more reciprocal in terms of the average number of alters-receivers and alters-providers, but the number of alters is below the average. Despite the reciprocity, these individuals have given support to a low proportion of the network (M=0.61, below the average). Again they are low providers, but with 60% of network activation.

The *nuclear-open* is quite reciprocal as they give and receive to a high number of alters. But the extension of these exchanges is average as it covers between 60 and 65% of the network. It seems that although the network is composed of a large number of alters, the active "core" is at the average level.

The *sibling-oriented* is quite reciprocal in number of alters who gave and received, but the percentage of the network in which these exchanges take place is very low and below the average, around 50%. Again, it is the case of a large network, quite reciprocal, but with a low active centre, corresponding to half of the potential.

Finally, *adult-children*, although they are characterized again by being providers, the number of alters-receivers is not so high as in the financial support and support in kind. Moreover, despite their role as providers, in this situation they are also receivers. They received from a

higher proportion of alters in comparison with the proportion of alters who gave them material and financial support. If we remember, they received financial help from 20% of the network, they received support in kind from 30% of the network, but in the case of services and care, they received from half of the network, at an average level. They gave to 4.98 alters (75%) and they received from 3.64 alters (53%).

Table 49 Summary of dyadic exchange patterns of *instrumental support*

	Beanpole-down	**Nuclear-closed**	**Extended-conjugal**	**Friendship-up**	**Nuclear-open**	**Siblings-oriented**	**Adult-children**
Network size	Large network	Small network	Small network	Small network	Large network	Large network	Large network
Financial and material support							
Ego role	Strong providers / Low receivers	Average providers / Low receivers	Reciprocal	Low providers / Strong receivers	Average Providers / Average receivers	Reciprocal	Strong providers / Low receivers
Degree of network activation	Large centre of alters-receivers / Low centre of alters-providers	Large centre of alters-receivers / Average centre of alters-providers	Half in both directions	Small centre of alters-receivers / Large centre of alters-providers	Small centre of givers and receivers	Small centre of givers and receivers	Very large centre of alters-receivers / Low centre of alters-providers
Services and care							
Ego role	Main providers / Average receivers	Average providers / Average receivers	Reciprocal	Low providers / Strong receivers	Reciprocal	Reciprocal	Strong providers / Strong receivers
Degree of network activation	Large centre of alters-receivers / Average centre of alters-providers	Large centre of alters-receivers	Large in both directions	Small centre of alters-receivers / Large centre of alters-providers	Small centre of givers and receivers	Small centre of givers and receivers	Large centre of alters-receivers / Average centre of alters-providers

4.1.4. Potential emotional support

As we did for the instrumental support, we will now focus on the dyadic exchange of emotional support. However, contrary to the exchange of instrumental support, which was reported in relation to the past ("over your life"), emotional support exchanges refer to the perception of potential emotional support in case of need (projection in the future).

Table 50 Exchange of potential emotional support: Average number and proportion of alters that would give and receive from ego

	Beanpole-down (8.12)	Nuclear closed (3.49)	Extended-conjugal (3.31)	Friendship-up (4.02)	Nuclear-open (7.47)	Siblings-oriented (6.50)	Adult-children (6.98)	Total (4.34)
Given								
Number of alters who received from ego (average)	6.58	3.14	2.85	3.02	6.43	5.44	6.53	3.71
Proportion of alters who received from ego (%)	83	**91**	87	81	86	84	**93**	87
Received								
Number of alters who gave to ego (average)	6,48	2,97	2,79	2,79	5,82	5,12	6,51	3,55
Proportion of alters who gave to ego (%)	80	**85**	**84**	73	77	81	**94**	83

Actually all configurations seem much more reciprocal when it comes to emotional support when compared to the patterns of instrumental support. Still, there are some significant differences.

Regarding the support given, we can see that *adult-children, beanpole-down* and *nuclear-open* are the configurations in which there is a higher number of alters that would receive emotional support from ego. Below the average number, we found the *nuclear-closed*, the *extended-conjugal* and the *friendship-up*. We immediately attribute these differences to the size of the different configurations. In terms of proportion, these exchanges represent different levels of activation. In *nuclear-closed* and *adult-children*, these exchanges would take place nearly in the whole network (91 and 93%, respectively). By contrast, in *friendship-up, beanpole-down* and *sibling-oriented* the proportion of alters-receivers is below the average (<.87).

In terms of *emotional support* received, we see again that largest networks show a higher number of alters that would provide emotional support to ego in case of need, and instead, in small networks the number of alters-providers is below the average, as in the case of *friendship-up, extended-conjugal and sibling-oriented.* In terms of proportion, in *adult-*

children, nuclear-closed and *extended-conjugal* nearly all the network members would give emotional support. Instead, friendship-up and nuclear-open stand out as the configurations in which the respondents would receive emotional support from a lower proportion of the network. Interestingly, these are the configurations with a higher integration of friends. An in-depth look at these two configurations reveals that friends are the main providers of emotional support within these mixed configurations, indicating the existence of a functional specialization of friends.

To complete the characterization of social capital, we need to add the structural dimension. We believe that the type of ties included and the differential orientation of personal configurations fully shape the structure of the connections between the network members. We cross the typology with the structural indicators to portray the configurations in terms of the way individuals connect with each other and the role of ego inside the network.

We will use the sociometry of exchange of emotional support to characterize the structure of relations. Do individuals provide emotional support to each other forming a tight-knit network or instead, the exchange is selective and organized in sub-groups of ties, in which ego assumes a role of bridge?

Table 51 Mean values of structural indicators of emotional support by type of configuration (size, density, transitivity and ego's centrality)

	Beanpole-down	Nuclear closed	Extended conjugal	Friendship up	Nuclear open	Siblings-oriented	Adult children	Total
Size	8.12	3.49	3.31	4.01	7.47	6.50	6.98	4.34
Density	.71	.81	.74	.62	.56	.69	.85	.74
Transitivity	.84	.87	.79	.64	.75	.78	.90	.80
Ego's centrality	.04	.06	.13	.20	.25	.08	.05	.11

Table 51 shows the average mean of some structural indicators across the seven types of configurations. As we saw before, the average size of personal networks is about 4.34, with a standard deviation of 2.60. As we analyse the ***average size*** by the type of configuration, we found significant statistical differences between them. *Beanpole-down* configuration is the largest one with an average size of M=8.12. Three other configurations are also characterized by a high number of members: *nuclear-open*, *siblings-oriented* and *adult children*. Instead,

friendship-up, *nuclear-closed* and *extended-conjugal* configurations are the smallest type of networks, ranging from 3 to 4 members. Regarding the ***density*** of emotional support, we should highlight two aspects: the networks are overall highly dense, with a mean age of M=0.74, which means that ¾ of the potential dyads are activated in the exchange of emotional support; on the other hand, the density values vary with the type of configuration. *Nuclear-closed* (M=0.81) and *adult-children* (0.85) are the configurations in which there is a high level of connectedness, above the mean value. The closure of personal relationships around the family of procreation is the common core of these two types of configurations which seems to enhance the density of connections. With an average value of density, we find the *extended-conjugal* (M=0.74), the *beanpole-down* (M=0.71) and the *siblings-oriented* (M=0.69); followed by the *friendship-up* (M=0.62) and the *nuclear-open* (M=0.56), which show the lowest values of density. ***Transitivity*** is also extremely high in the total sample, with a mean value of M=0.80. This is also an indicator of connectedness. The more transitive networks are those who show an *adult-children* (M=0.90) configuration, followed by the *beanpole-down* (M=0.84) and the *nuclear-closed* (M=0.87). Below the average transitivity, we find the *friendship-up* configuration and the *nuclear-open.* If we examine ***ego's betweenness centrality of ego*** measured by the betweenness, we find that the autonomy of ego is very low in all types of configurations (M=0.11). The configurations, in which ego assumes a major role of bridging-actor, are the f*riendship-up* (M=0.20) and the *nuclear-open* (M=0.25), with an average value of ego's centrality above the average.

All the structural indicators vary with type of personal configuration. Two major conclusions can be drawn: the openness of the boundaries to include of non-kin, especially friends, decrease the level of connectedness; at the same time, individuals belonging to those types of configurations have a higher autonomy as they play a bridging role between elements or sub-components of the networks which are not connected to each other, unless through ego. Figures 50 and 51 illustrate two cases of bonding and bridging type of social capital based on emotional interdependencies associated to a nuclear-closed configuration and a friendship-up configuration, respectively.

Figure 50 Graphical projection of the sociometry of emotional support in a nuclear-closed configuration (example of bonding)

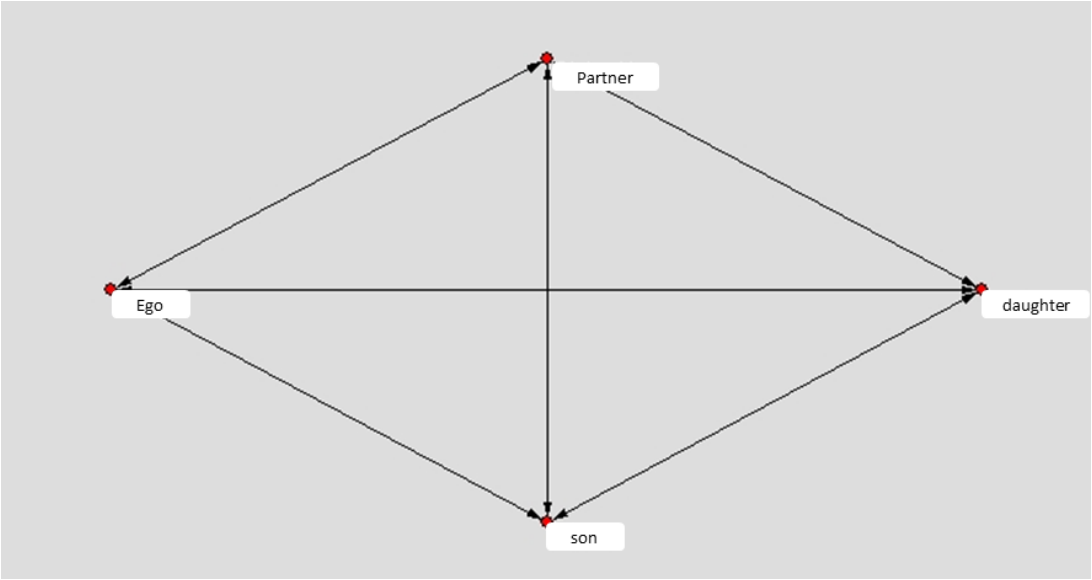
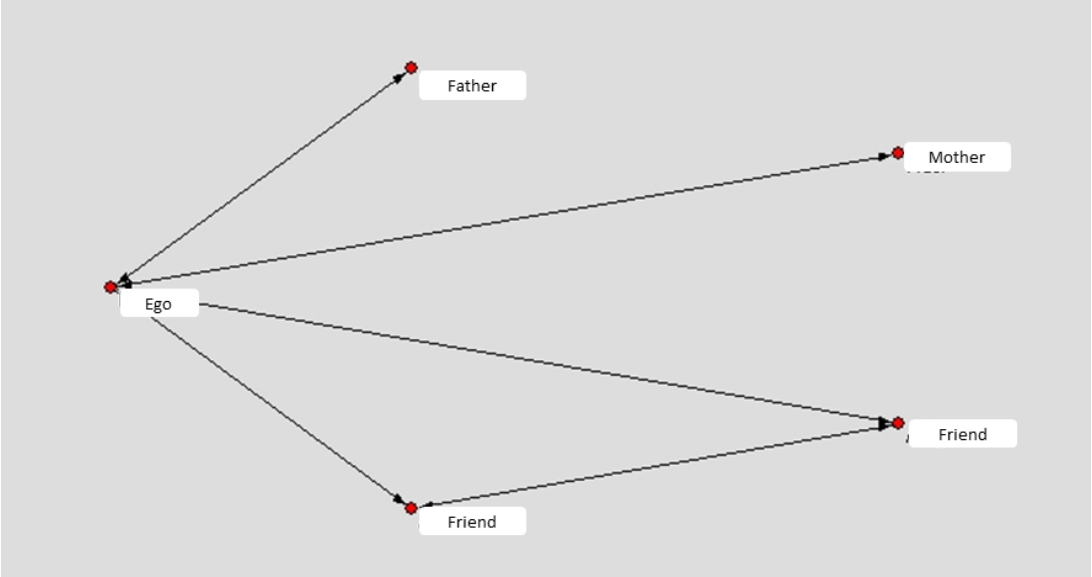


Figure 51 Graphical projection of the sociometry of emotional support in a friendship-up configuration (example of bridging)



The level of network closure and the degree of autonomy of ego in each type of configuration is systematized in the following table.

Table 52 Summary of the structural aspects of personal configurations (N=1487)

	Extended Conjugal	Nuclear-closed	Friendship-origin	Siblings-oriented	Beanpole down	Nuclear open	Adult Children
Connectedness (bonding)	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	High
Autonomy (bridging)	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low

4.1.5. Face-to-face contact

Another dimension of expressive support is the face-to-face interaction. We calculated three measures to inform us on the frequency of face-to-face contact: the proportion of alters who contact everyday with ego, the proportion of alters who never contact with ego and the density of frequent contact as a structural indicator of the network of interaction.

Table 53 Face-to-face contact: Proportion of everyday contact, proportion of face-face contact and density of frequent contact by configuration

	Beanpole-down (8.12)	Nuclear closed (3.49)	Extended-conjugal (3.31)	Friendship-up (4.02)	Nuclear-open (7.47)	Siblings-oriented (6.50)	Adult-children (6.98)	Total (4.34)
Everyday contact (proportion)	,46	,58	,67	,47	,43	,48	,41	,58
Absence of contact (proportion)	,015	,00	,01	,02	,01	,02	,01	,01
Density of frequent contact	,75	,67	,60	,56	,57	,67	,78	,64

Extended-conjugal and *nuclear-closed* show a higher proportion of alters with whom they contact every day; and instead all the other configurations show a lower proportion of alter with whom they daily contact ($F(1489,6)=18.51$, $p<.000$). Regarding the absence of face to face interaction, there are no significant statistical differences between the configurations. Actually, this situation is very rare, as on average, only 1% of the network members never contact with ego. In terms of the structure of contact, the average density is .64, which means that less than 3/4 of the network is engaged in frequent contact. The configurations which are more densely engaged in frequent interaction are the adult-children (M=.78) and the beanpole-down (.75), with ¾ of active ties. Instead, the friendship-up and the nuclear-open

are the less dense networks in terms of frequent contact, with M=.56 and M=.57, respectively ($F(1489,6)=33.00$, $p<.000$)

4.1.6. Conflict

As we have seen in chapter 2, conflict is quite rare among personal networks. Still, we decided to examine if there was a higher incidence of conflict in some configuration than in others. However, the presence or absence of conflict do not vary with type of configuration ($\chi=1.74$, n.s).

Table 54 existence of conflict within each type of configuration

	Beanpole-down	Nuclear closed	Extended-conjugal	Friendship-up	Nuclear-open	Siblings-oriented	Adult-children	Total
Conflict	9.3	6.6	7.2	6.7	9.1	6.1	5.5	7.1
No conflict	90.7	93.4	92.8	93.3	90.9	93.9	94.5	92.9

4.1.7. Normative influence

As mentioned in the introduction, the existence of emotional and practical interdependencies between the network members produces spaces for normative control, which tend to shape the content of beliefs and attitudes. Thus, the nature of these interdependencies has an impact on the type of attitudes, in particular, when they are related to family life and gender relations. Indeed, this process is characterized by a circular and recursive association as values shape the way individuals construct their networks, but networks' dynamics also exert influence on values orientation. However, it is worthwhile looking at the correlations between the two variables.

Figure 52 Distribution of the attitudinal index on *child centeredness* by configuration

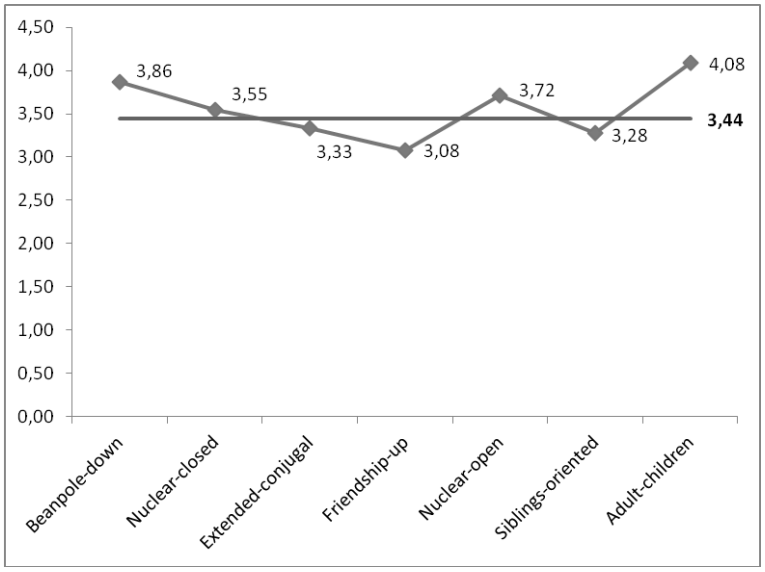
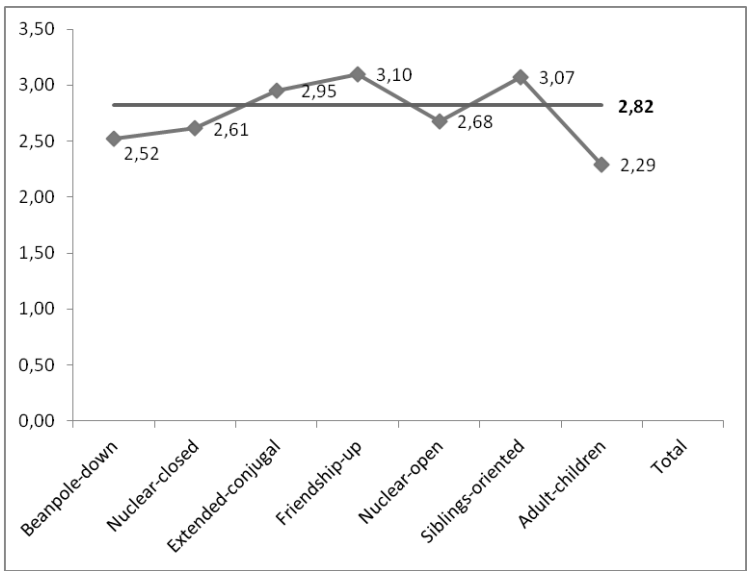


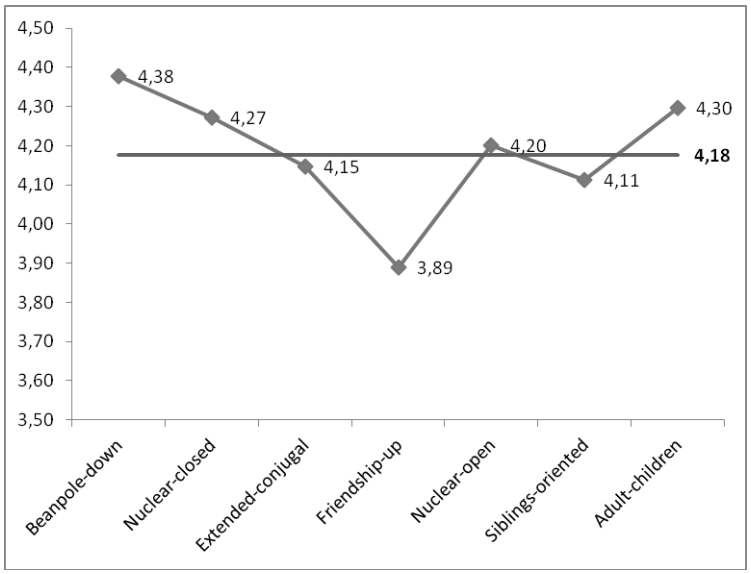
Figure 52 shows the average mean of *child-centeredeness* in the total sample (red line) and the distributio of the average means by configuration ($F_{(1485,6)=}13.70$, $p<.000$). The respondents who are embedded in adult-children, nuclear-open and beanpole-down are more child-centred, followed by those in extended-conjugal and nuclear-closed. The less child centred (below the average mean) are the respondents who are embedded in friendship-up and sibling-oriented.

Figure 53 Distribution of the attitudinal index on the *openness to new family forms* by configuration



Regarding the level of *openness to new family forms*, figure 45 shows that individuals who are in sibling-oriented and friendship-up are show a high level of openness to diversity, whereas those in adult-children and beanpole-down show a low score in this index ($F_{(1485,6)=}$13.13, p<.000).

Figure 54 Distribution of the attitudinal index on *familialism* by configuration



Finally, regarding *familialism*, all individuals present a high level of this familialistic ideal ($F_{(1485,6)=}$6.13, p<.000). Still, those in friendship-up configurations stand out with the lowest level of family primacy (M=3.89). Also those embedded in siblings-oriented and extended-conjugal configurations show a low score of family primacy. Instead, all others are highly familialistic.

In sum, it seems that personal configurations shape family attitudes and vice-versa, but we also see a tricky interaction effect of birth-cohort moderating this relationship.

5. Discussion

Relational closeness is tied to both expressive and instrumental interdependencies. This empirical evidence contradicts the modernity ideal which tends separate and opposes the emotional and the material dimensions of close relationships.

If on the one hand, individuals are emotionally and instrumentally interdependent; on the other hand, these interactions influences and are influenced by a normative dimension, as the type of personal configuration is closely related to attitudes towards family life and gender roles through a recursive relationship.

In fact, individuals perceive themselves as giving more instrumental support than they receive. This is particularly true regarding financial support and support in kind, as individuals have given on average two 2 alters and have received only from 1 alters. Services and care exchange follows a more balanced pattern. These dyadic exchanges are fully shaped by cohort, but also by structural and family-biographical factors.

Another point we would like to stress is the strong linkage between the compositional properties of personal networks and the dyadic and structural properties of social capital, as the patterns of instrumental and expressive support varies with the type of configuration. The construction of personal configurations is mainly based on some principles linked to genealogical orientation (horizontal and vertical, up and down) and the openness and closeness of the boundaries to include non-kin, which fully shape both the role of ego in the dyadic exchange patterns but also on the whole structure of the network.

Those configurations which are vertical oriented in a descending line, such as beanpole-down or adult-children, are more likely to shape the role of ego as provider; whereas a vertical oriented configuration in an ascending line (friendship-up) is more likely to shape the role of ego as receiver. By contrary, more horizontal configurations provide more balanced and reciprocal exchanges (e.g., sibling-oriented).

The openness of the boundaries to non-kin, as in the case of *friendship-up* and *nuclear-open*, is crucial on the bonding and bridging type of social capital associated with the emotional interdependencies. Overall, personal configurations which are kinship-based produces a

bonding type of social capital, as network members are densely connected and relationships are quite transitive. By contrast, mixed networks provide a more bridging type of social capital as individuals are privileged intermediaries between different components of the network, and thus, have a more central and autonomous role. These mixed configurations are also characterized by a functional specialization as friends are the main emotional support providers.

Conflict is almost absent of personal configurations and daily contact, although dense, is not as strong as emotional support and varies with the type of configuration. Actually, being emotionally closed does not necessarily means being in frequent contact.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this thesis was to understand the way individuals construct their personal networks in Portuguese society, and to explore the instrumental and expressive interdependencies developed between the network members, by considering personal networks as social capital.

In order to investigate this main research issue, we combined the configurational and the lifecourse perspectives, as these two theoretical approaches enable us to study both compositional and structural properties of personal networks, as well as providing a focus on the complex intersection of historical, biographical and social contexts. Therefore, we adopted a social network analysis' technique of ego-centred networks and a cross-cohort design of three birth-cohorts of men and women representing different life-stages and generational backgrounds in Portuguese society.

This research issue is embedded in the contemporary debates on the transformation of family and personal life in late modernity in western societies during the last decades. These transformations have been mainly discussed by mainstream theories of modernity and individualisation, but also through the lens of more interpretative lines of research on families and personal relationships, in which the configurational and life course approaches have played a major role.

In order to explore some of the main assumptions of both individualisation and pluralisation trends, we focused on four complementary issues: 1) the identification of the generative *principles of relational closeness*; 2) the *diversity of personal configurations* through an inter and intra-cohort analysis; 3) the *structure of social capital* provided by personal configurations, based on the expressive and instrumental interdependencies; and finally, transversal to all these issues, 4) the nature of *relational choice* in the frame of lifecourse, structural, normative, family and biographical shaping factors. Next, we will draw a first broad picture of the main characteristics of personal networks in Portuguese society and then discuss the interpretation of the main findings in the light of our four research issues.

Personal networks in Portuguese society are characterized by a significant predominance of family ties, with 70% of the sample showing networks only composed of kinship ties. However, findings also reveal significant signs of pluralisation through the inclusion of non-kin in 30% of individuals' networks. Actually, personal networks reveal complex configurations of close ties, through the articulation of primary and distant relatives, oriented

in both ascending and descending genealogical lines, but also through the combination of kin and non-kin bonds. This diversity is also increased by the differential inclusion of co-resident and non co-resident members, female and male alters, high and low educated alters, old and recent acquaintances, positive and negative figures.

In terms of network-size, personal networks are quite small as they are composed of 4 to 5 members. Still this plurality of ways of building up personal networks, according to smaller or larger configurations, introduces some variability in network size, as we found configurations ranging from 3 to 8 members. The idea of large personal networks as a feature of strong solidarity in Portuguese society may be challenged through this first finding.

The mutual interdependencies developed by network members are characterized by a limited degree of multiplexity as the several types of resources circulating within personal networks - expressive (contact, emotional support and conflict); and instrumental (financial or patrimonial, material support in kind and services and care assistance) – are unevenly distributed. These interdependencies take place both at a dyadic level (between ego and each networks member), and a structural level (between all network members, including ego). Overall, the dyadic exchange of support between ego and his/her close ties is quite intense in terms of emotional support. By contrast, conflictual interactions are not frequent and daily contact, although frequent, is not as strong as the exchange of emotional support. The exchange of financial and material support between strong ties is less strong than the exchange of services and care, as the former types of support are by nature more occasional and strongly influenced by birth-cohort and the type of configuration in which ego is embedded, and which shape the role of ego as provider, receiver or both. However, both in expressive and in instrumental support, individuals always perceive themselves as giving more than receiving, and the prevailing canon is that of giving support to 2 network members and receiving support from only 1 network member. Thus, exchanges are more unbalanced than reciprocal, yet there are some exceptions, depending on the nature of instrumental support, type of configuration and social differentiation mechanisms. In terms of structure, personal networks are highly dense and transitive, since on average three in four of the networks members are strongly connected to each other in emotional interdependencies and the autonomy and centrality of ego is rather low. This means that overall, social capital generated in the mutual emotional interdependencies is mainly characterized by a *bonding* structure rather than a *bridging* pattern. These interdependencies are also related to different

levels of familialism, child-centeredness and openness to new family forms, as family values shape and are shaped by personal configurations in a circular or recursive relationship. Moreover, kinship-based configurations correspond to a strong focus on family and child-centeredness and on the contrary, less favourable attitudes to new family forms.

These are the main general characteristics of personal networks in Portuguese society. This research also underlines that this landscape is not uniform, as personal networks are fully shaped by differentiated lifecourse, structural, normative, family, biographical, and subjective contexts in which individuals are embedded. Moreover, the diversity of personal configurations also produces variations in this broader picture of personal networks. Therefore, we will now focus on the main findings related to the mechanisms and processes underlying the construction of personal configurations which produce this diversity.

Our first research issue was the identification of generative *principles of relational closeness* which seem to underlie individuals' choices regarding whom they consider as important. This is a central topic in the debate on the transformation of family and personal life in contemporary societies as some mainstream theories, such as individualisation thesis, have been underlining individuals' detachment from more traditional principles of blood, partnership, bilateral filiation and generational proximity, and its replacement by more affinity-based or individualized principles. Our findings support the negotiation between more traditional principles and so-called modern principles, rather than a rupture or replacement.

If on the one hand, the findings highlight the permanence of the well-known generative mechanisms of closeness, such as kinship (blood, alliance and filiation) principles, co-residence, duration of the relationship, positive interactions, and homophily; on the other hand, findings also point to the existence of other mechanisms, such as *selectivity, flexibility,* and *differentiation* in the building up of relational proximity.

Although 70% of the sample show personal networks exclusively composed of kinship ties, the other 30% includes at least one non-kin member, mainly friends. Actually, one in ten respondents included at least 1 friend. Elements of the family of procreation, such as the partner and children, are central ties in personal relationships as 1) they are predominantly represented in personal networks as the most frequently reported ties considered as important in individuals' lives, and 2) because they are not submitted to any selection filter. This means that when we compared the availability of these ties in individuals' demographic reservoir

and their inclusion in the network, we found a total overlap. The same does not apply to other network members, even in relation to highly normative ties, such as parents and siblings. The idea that the inclusion of some ties and the exclusion of others in personal networks would be mainly related to the pool of relatives available, is only partially confirmed in our findings, since with the exception of partner and children, individuals choose whether parents, siblings, and grandchildren are considered as important. Thus, processes of *selectivity* regulate the action of kinship principles.

If the previous mechanism reveals how individuals choose whom they consider as important from their pool of relatives, *flexibility* shows how individuals select whom they consider as family among those whom they considered as important. In other words, we found that nearly all network members are considered as family, in a proportion that goes beyond the proportion of kinship ties. Thus, *a family-like* meaning can be attributed beyond the limits of blood and alliance, as in the case of friends. Further work on this issue revealed that family meaning is tied to the quality of the tie, rather than the formal kinship status (Wall, and Gouveia, 2014). The boundaries between kin and non-kin are thus becoming blurred and suffused in Portuguese society, challenging the rigidity of kinship principles.

Finally, the third mechanism of *differentiation* underlines the variations in the salience of certain morphological characteristics in personal networks according to lifecourse dynamics, social contexts and family and biographical circumstances. Birth-cohort emerges as the major structuring factor of compositional properties of personal networks, followed by family-biographical factors. However, structural factors associated with social class and gender relations also account for some variations in the endorsement of specific principles. Social class mainly impacts on kinship salience and alters' educational level, whereas gender mainly influence co-residency, proportion of male and female alters, and the inclusion of negative ties.

Findings show a decrease of kinship salience in the younger cohorts, but also in more individualized family-biographical profiles, such as those where there is no partner, no child and individuals living alone. Also those who work in more skilled occupations are less likely to rely solely on kinship criteria. This lower centrality of kinship in the younger cohort may reflect both changing trends of pluralisation affecting this cohort in a generational sense, as well as a privileged period of the life-stage in which the sociability circles of interaction are

more diverse. This is particularly true for those who have not (yet) made the transition to partnership and parenthood, as these transitions fully shape the openness and closure of networks boundaries (Bidart and Lavenu, 2005; Oliker And Fisher, 1983). In the case of the oldest cohort, the higher proportion of kin may be related to an age-declining process related to health problems leading to a decrease on the pool of friends and peers of this age group (Suanet, et al. 2013). Moreover, health problems and lack of autonomy may also concentrate personal networks on those who provide care and services (usually close kin).

Having shared the same household with others also enhances the feelings of closeness between people. The history of co-residence, i.e., the fact of having shared the same household with ego at some point of his/her life is an important relational criterion of inclusion, since findings show that 7 in 10 network members have shared the same household with ego in the past. If on the one hand, family history and residential trajectories play a major role in strengthens interdependencies between significant others, on the other hand there is also a significant proportion of network members crossing the boundaries of several households, thus also underlying the importance of ties beyond the limits of co-residence (Bonvalet and Lelièvre, 2013; Widmer, 2010).

The duration of the relationship also counts as a criterion for considering a person as important. An examination of different levels of acquaintanceship reveals that either very old or very recent ties are less likely to be included, as individuals show a high percentage of network members whom they have known for a long time but who mainly shared a recent past in their life (between 2/2 to 3/4 of egos' life). The variations in the duration of relationships are strongly linked to the ascending vs. descending nature of ties included, since those who are childless or belong to the younger cohort are more likely to include a higher proportion of very old acquaintances (e.g., parents or parents in-law). Another related issue, but linked to a methodological artefact, is the fact that the reconstitution of the network was based on ego's perception in relation to the previous year of the interview, and not in relation to the whole lifecourse.

Overall, individuals privileged important persons with whom they have positive interactions, but ¼ of the sample also includes individuals who despite being important, also have more negative interactions with ego. This dual valence of relationships is more frequently associated with conjugal ties (partner and ex-partner), collaterals (siblings and sibling in-law)

and non-kin (friends and neighbours), which are more horizontal ties. Interestingly, the presence of these "negative" alters does not necessarily imply the existence of conflictual relationships within the network. People, in fact, recognize the importance of certain persons in their lives with whom they are interdependent, even if they do not get along with them (Widmer, 2010). The coexistence of contradictory facets within the same tie has been acknowledged in close and family relationships, as processes of ambivalence (Lusher, 2002; Connidis, 2010). The acceptance of these "ambivalent ties" is more likely to take place in the middle and younger cohorts and also among men. Again, this is more likely to be found in the networks of those who are not living in conjugality and who are childless.

Homophily criteria, also known as the "like-me hypothesis", are also important in the construction of personal networks in Portuguese society, mainly based on educational similarities (Lazersfel and Merton, 1954; Lauman, 1966, McPerson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001). Highly educated alters are mainly cited by highly educated egos, and low educated alters are mainly reported by low educated egos. We should however keep in mind that these educational similarities are also conditional on parental status, as those who have young children show a higher proportion of low educated alters. As in homogamy processes (Rosa, 2005), these homophily preferences show how social inequalities may be reproduced through the building up of personal networks, by creating spaces of inclusion and exclusion. Regarding gender preferences, due to the prevalence of heterosexual couples, men always include more female alters and women also include more male alters. The cross-sex rule prevails, instead of a same-sex composition, but this trend is likely to vary across the lifespan (Suanet, et al. 2013; Oliker and Fisher, 1983; Bastani, 2007).

These main generative principles associated with kinship status, co-residence history, acquaintance duration, positive interactions, homophily criteria and attribution of a family-meaning, coexist and are articulated in individuals' relational choices. As argued above, the way people build up their personal relationships should be conceptualized as a negotiation of principles within a continuum ranging from more traditional principles to more individualised mechanisms, since individuals appropriate these criteria in their private lives according to their lifecourse, structural, normative and family biographical contexts.

Another research issue under analysis was the pluralization of personal configurations in Portuguese society and how these configurations are shaped by muldimensional factors

associated with lifecourse, structural, normative, family, and biographical factors, as well as with the investments in several life domains. The configurational approach underlines the importance not only of morphological aspects based on composition, but also of the structure of connections. Thus, a second issue to be examined is whether this diversity contributes to different patterns of expressive, instrumental and normative interdependencies, and thus different types of social capital. We will integrate the two dimensions and characterize the main types of personal configurations (table 55), as well as indicate the main predictors of the different types of arrangement.

Table 55 Summary of the morphological and structural aspects of personal configurations

		Extended Conjugal (40%)	Nuclear-closed (28%)	Friendship-up (9%)	Siblings-oriented (9%)	Beanpole down (5%)	Nuclear Open (5%)	Adult Children (4%)
Composition								
	Focus	Couple and ascendants	Family of procreation	Friends and parents	Siblings and collaterals	Multigenerational ties	Family of procreation and friends	Several adult children
	Orientation	Vertical up	Vertical down	Both vertical and horizontal	Both vertical and horizontal	Vertical down	Both vertical and horizontal	Vertical down
	Openness	Average	Closed	High	Average	Average	High	Closed
	Size	Small	Small	Small	Large	Large	Large	Large
Instrumental	**Financial In kind**	Reciprocal	Providers	Strong Receivers	Reciprocal	Strong Providers	Providers	Strong Providers
	Services	Reciprocal	Reciprocal	Strong receivers	Reciprocal	Strong providers	Reciprocal	Receivers
Emotional	**Dyadic exchange**	Reciprocal	Providers	Functional specialization	Reciprocal	Reciprocal	Functional specialization	Reciprocal
	Connectedness	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	High
	Autonomy	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low
Normative influence	**Family primacy**	Average	High	Low	Average	High	High	High
	Openness to new family forms	Average	Average	High	High	Low	Average	Low
	Child centeredness	Low	Average	Low	Low	High	High	High

Findings reveal a diversity of personal configurations through the combination of different types of ties structured through the articulation of dichotomic mechanisms, such as the inclusion of immediate vs. primary kin vs. distant or secondary kin, of openness vs. closure of the boundaries to non-kin, of a vertical vs. a horizontal orientation; and the ascending vs. descending genealogical line. These findings are consistent with national and international

studies, who found diversity in personal and family configurations, although they do not vary to infinity as they are organized according to the same informal principles (Widmer, 2010). The complex combination of the above mentioned mechanisms results in seven main ideal-types of personal configurations: the *extended-conjugal*, the *nuclear-closed*, the *friendship-up*, the *siblings-oriented*, the *beanpole-down*, the *nuclear-open* and the *adult-children*.

The predominant type of configuration is the *extended-conjugal* which is mainly focused on the partner, the parents and the parents in-law, but it can also include one child. The main element of this configuration is the conjugal bond, but the presence of parents from both sides of the couple, even if in some cases one child may also be included, reveals a vertical ascending genealogical organization. The dyadic exchange of instrumental support is quite reciprocal as ego is equally a receiver and a provider. This configuration is quite small and exchange of support takes place in half of the network. In terms of connectedness this configuration is averagely dense, but with a low autonomy of ego. The construction of this configuration is mainly predicted by birth-cohort as it is overrepresented among young adults, but it is also related with partnership and parental status, as those who are currently living in conjugality and are childless are more likely to build this type of arrangement. Individuals integrated in *extended conjugal* configurations are negatively associated with investment in *family life* and *social orientation*, and by contrast, positively associated with investment in *education and leisure*. These individuals are moderately focused on family and open to new family forms, and reveal a low child-centeredness.

The second type of configuration is the *nuclear-closed* which is mainly focused on the family of procreation. However, it can take on two different forms: an arrangement composed of partner and children or a lone-parent arrangement. This configuration has a vertical descending orientation and is totally closed to non-kin. Ego is an average provider as he/she gave instrumental support to an average number of network members, but which correspond to a large proportion of the configuration. They are also providers of emotional support. Therefore, this configuration is small with a high active centre of alters receiving from ego. In terms of emotional interdependencies, this network is quite dense and transitive and ego has a low centrality as an intermediary. This configuration is mainly shaped by cohort, with the oldest cohort being more likely to build this type of arrangement. Although it seems contradictory, being in conjugality decreases the likelihood to build this nuclear-closed configuration, but we should remember that lone-parent arrangements (either through divorce

or widowhood) are also included in this ideal-type. This configuration is associated with a high investment in family life and the home and kin domain and a low level of investment in *education and leisure.* Their attitudes are highly focused on family and averagely child-centred and open to new family forms.

Another type of personal configuration is the *friendship-up* configuration, which is distinctive from the previous ones due to its mixed nature. This configuration combines elements of the family of orientation, the mother and the father, and also includes friends. Unlike all other configurations, ego is a privileged receiver of instrumental support. This is also the case of a small network but with a large active centre of providers of support. Interestingly, with regards to emotional support, they present a low proportion of emotional providers, with friends being the strongest emotional givers of support. This means that the integration of non-kin creates a functional specialization. The pattern of emotional interdependencies is sparsely connected, with ego assuming a major role as intermediate of friends and relatives sub-sets. This configuration is predicted by birth-cohort as the younger cohort being more likely to build this type of configuration. Social class dynamics also interfere as those in professional and technician and executive and entrepreneur positions are more likely to adopt this mixed arrangement. More individualized family profiles such as being un-partnered and childless contributes for the building up of this type of arrangement. The *friendship-up* configuration is negatively associated with *family life* and *home and kin*; and positively associated with *education and leisure*. These individuals present a low level of family primacy and child-centeredness, and by contrary, a high openness to new family forms.

The *sibling-oriented* configuration stems from the sibling bond, as it is mainly composed of collateral family ties such as siblings and siblings in-law, but also nephews and nieces, and cousins. Uncles and aunts may also be integrated in this arrangement. Although the focus is on collaterals, partners and children are also included, as well as co-workers. Thus, the network is both vertical and horizontal. In fact, this is the case of a wide arrangement of close ties. This configuration is quite reciprocal in terms of instrumental support, but the exchanges take place in a small active part of the whole network. This is the case where a large network does not necessarily mean effective support. Regarding the structure of emotional interdependencies, this arrangement presents an average level of density and a low centrality of ego. This type of configuration is exclusively associated with birth-cohort, as it is more likely to be constructed in the frame of the younger and middle cohorts. The preference for

building up a *sibling-oriented* configuration is not related to a differential investment in any life foci. In terms of attitudes, they present an average level of family primacy, a low child-centeredness and a high openness to new family forms.

The *beanpole-down* configuration is organized in a multi-generational arrangement with a descending genealogical orientation. Ego is in the position of grandparent and includes the partner from the same generation, the children and children in-law from the subsequent generation, and grandchildren representing the third generation. The embeddedness in this vertical configuration of descendants shapes the role of ego as a strong provider, as they not only give to a large number of network members, but also cover nearly the entire network. By contrast, they are very strong receivers of instrumental support. In terms of emotional connections, these arrangements are quite dense, revealing a bonding type of social capital. The major shaping factor of this cohort is household composition as the fact of living in a couple with children household or a complex family household strongly increases the chance of building this type of vertical arrangement. Also, the oldest cohort is mainly associated with this multigenerational configuration. This configuration is associated with a strong investment in family life and social activities. These individuals are highly family and child focused, and by contrary, they show a low openness to new family forms.

The *nuclear-open*, by contrast with the *nuclear-closed*, is not confined to the family of procreation unit but it is open to the outside through the inclusion of friends. This is again the case of a mixed network. Even if average providers, they are also average receivers of instrumental support, corresponding to a small centre of support activated in both directions. This is again the case of a large network, but with few active members. The inclusion of friends also decreases the proportion of provision of support, with these non-kin ties being the main activated members for emotional support. This configuration provides a bridging type of social capital as ego is the main bridge between the nuclear unit and friends. Belonging to the middle cohort and occupying professional and technician or executive and entrepreneur positions enhances the chance of being embedded in this mixed configuration. Individuals in *nuclear open* have invested more in *family life* and *social orientation*. These individuals are highly family focused and child-centeredness, and show an average openness to new family forms.

Finally, the *adult-children* configuration is composed of more than 5 children, in absence or presence of the partner. Whether assuming a nuclear structure or a lone parent arrangement, this configuration is foremost child-focused and thus presents a vertical descending orientation. These individuals are very strong providers and low receivers of instrumental and material support. However, they are also strong receivers of services and care. This configuration also reveals a high level of connectedness and low individual autonomy. This configuration is mainly associated with the oldest cohort and is strongly predicted by household composition, as those individuals who live alone are more likely to build this child-focused configuration. Those embedded in *adult-children* configurations show a low investment in education and a high investment in *social orientation*. Individuals in this configuration are highly family focused and child-centred, and by contrary, they show less favourable attitudes to new family forms.

Some additional conclusions may be drawn from these main findings on the diversity of personal networks and social capital patterns. The debate on changing trends in family and personal life, either through the pluralization of family arrangements or of lifecourse pathways have been said to contribute to the diversification of personal relationships. Moreover, the individualization thesis has been framing these shifts in a narrative of family decline, resulting from individuals' freedom from social constraints and institutions, with their relational choices emerging as purely self-determined and as a full exercise of agency.

From this perspective, our findings show that family is still central in personal networks, even if relational proximity is becoming more plural and personal networks assuming different configurations by combining primary and distant kin, ascendants and descendants, and by opening or closing the boundaries to non kin. Therefore, modernisation of personal relationships does not necessarily imply the erosion of family. We witness a reconfiguration of meanings and a negotiation of old and new principles of closeness through the mechanisms of flexibility, selectivity and differentiation.

Another critical issue of the individualisation thesis is the homogeneous, culturally-blind and "monochromatic" vision of the relationship between individuals and family, opposing institutionalism and tradition in one side and freedom and electivity on the other side, without paying attention to the in-between nuances. In our work, we have seen how old and new principles coexist and are negotiated in the context of individuals' lifecourse, socially

differentiated conditions, normative background and family biographical circumstances, producing a diversity of personal configurations. Relational choice is must of all, a contextual choice as individuals draw on some relational flexibility to choose who belongs to their relational world, but the inclusion of close ties is nevertheless still shaped by multidimensional processes of differentiation.

Another critical issue is the ideal of modernity which separates the material and the affective dimensions in the construction of personal relationships (Portugal, 2014). In line with Maarcell Mauss' early writings on the circulation of gift, we saw how individuals are strongly interdependent both through expressive and instrumental exchanges. An important person who is emotionally close to ego is also likely to be the one who give and provide instrumental support to ego. Thus, relational closeness also underlies instrumental criteria in articulation with kinship, co-residence, homophily, acquaintanceship, positive interaction and attribution of family meaning principles.

Finally, from the point of view of further research, we should refer two important aspects to be considered in future analysis.

In fact, this intertwining of age-cohort-period effects and the interdependencies of structural, normative, family and biographical factors can be seen as the advantage and disadvantage of this research design, as it enable us to compare the construction of personal networks across several differentiated contexts, but at the same time, the circularity and recursive relationships between all the variables jeopardize the heuristic potential of this study, namely, the isolation of effects. Further developments of this study should deal with the isolation of these effects by analysing in-detailed the diversity of personal configurations in each cohort but also the social capital patterns. Moreover, in-depth analysis of alters and isolation of network sub-sets should be developed in order to grasp more interactional effects between ego and the alters, and within alters.

Other methodological issues, such as the wording of the name generator and the instructions which generate the matrix of supports, the memory biases and information retrieval problems associated with the retrospective nature of the questionnaire, and the control for social desirability issues and interview-interviewer effects associated with the P.A.P.I. method of data-collection should be improved and controlled in future research.

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APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE